

DARE TO BE FREE

Prov. 14:34

It was no accident as we look back upon the history of America, we discover that our history had something in it to cause us to be thankful. We stand today as Americans and we proudly sing, "My Country Tis Of Thee", sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where thy fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountain side - let freedom ring. —

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!

Those lines express, perhaps your heart and your thinking today. As we think about July 4th and our patriotism, and the holiday on the calendar which we call Independence Day.

Samuel F. Smith was born in a little house in Boston, Mass. When he grew to manhood, he went to Andover Seminary where he studied to become a minister. One day while Samuel was a student at the school, a friend of his received several German hymnbooks. And they brought them to Sam to look over. On February, 1832, one afternoon he was leafing through one of the books. He came upon the tune which is now known as "America". Samuel liked the tune so very much, and he noticed that he could use patriotic words. Suddenly he felt like writing some words about his own country. America - to sing with the music. He picked up a scrap of waste paper which lay close by, and he wrote down the words as they came to him. In less than half an hour, he had written the words which we sing and love today. Samuel gave the words to his friend and soon forgot about them.

On the next July 4th, the Park Street Church in Boston had a children's celebration.

Samuel Smith heard the children sing his song for the first time. Since that day, children and adults alike, have loved the song, "America". And it has become one of our favorite national hymns. "Sweet land of liberty" if only we could dare to be free today.

On every hand our critics tell us what is wrong with America. Where we have failed and why we are hated. And I believe we proudly gather around our flag today, and we would render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. You remember, the Apostle Paul, he proudly boasted that he was a Roman citizen. As a citizen, as a Jew, as a Christian. He had a responsibility towards his country. And so do we toward America - which stands for liberty.

America is a country that opens her doors to all the persecuted of the world.

The men who signed the Declaration of Independence were moved by a magnificent dream. In a book, we call the Bible. It proclaims freedoms, the world thought impossible of fulfillment. From the beginning the dream of freedom and equal opportunity has been the shining light for people all over the world.

We must dare to be free.

We cannot think about our history without recognizing religious influences. Freedom, as a right for all men, is unique.

Where did our freedom come from. In it's search for its origin - it takes us way back. To our Father's God - our author of liberty. It takes us back to the creation of man. And even the idea of freedom goes way back into the Old Testament. Which we have been studying - a nation becomes free. The prophets, and Moses, led his people from the wrath of Pharoah, he demanded, let my people go. Later that great army of enslaved people moved into a new country where they could proclaim

liberty throughout the land and to all of the inhabitants thereof. Lev. 25:10.

These words from Lev. are inscribed on America's liberty bell.

The idea of freedom takes us back to Jesus Christ. Who stands in Nazareth and preaches forth rightly concerning his destiny, and his call. "To preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are grieved." Liberty and freedom is the idea that was at the heart of the pilgrims when they landed on Plymouth Rock. They had crowded into the Mayflower and the Mayflower Compact based upon Biblical principle, as they saw them - later to be called the Birth Certificate of American Democracy.

There was an increasing number of people throughout the colonies, who had little or no religious principles as they saw them. Later, this freedom - this freedom that God has richly blessed America with.

We could well think first about the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. This indeed is our heritage, which he has given us. When God says to a nation, if you will honor and obey me, I will bless you. That has stood through the years. Remember, this is what God told Solomon. 2 Chron. 7:12. The Lord appeared unto him by night, said, I've heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to be my house of sacrifice, and if I shut up the Heavens that there be no rain. Or if I command the locus to devour the land, or if I send the pestilents among the people, my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray. And seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. God gives them conditions that will make them a great nation. V. 17 - he says, If thou wilt walk before me as David, thy Father, walked, and do according to all I have commanded thee, and shall observe my statues and my judgements, then will I establish the throne of my kingdom according

as I have coveted with David, thy father. Saying thou shalt not fail thee, a man, to be ruler in Israel. And of course, God made a promise there, unto him. And I believe this is part of the blessing of God upon us. For over 200 years now we have had leaders that God has promised to shower us with his greatness. As he did Solomon and Israel.

If you have been privileged to travel to many countries in this world, and if you would tell what you had seen and what you have learned, all the weaknesses and the problems without any question, the greatest nation on earth is the one in which you live.

America is a place where a poor farm boy can rise and preach to the masses. America is a place where a poor farm boy can rise and go to the White House. A boy from a log cabin can make his way to the highest office in the land. There is no other nation on this earth, where a man not born in wealth, can lift himself out of his poverty and become a wealthy man even. But multitudes of people have gone from rags to riches in America. There are many people in this land who have bettered themselves socially. More so than any other place on the face of the globe of this world.

Now many things we could say about the blessings of this land. We could talk about the blessings of this country, the villages, the industry. The great leaders we've had.

But God has given us the best. And here is a privilege that many of us take for granted.

Our forefathers were honored of God. I believe God led in the discovery of America. As you go back and look in the history books as Dr. A. Lloyd Collins says, and he wrote in his book, God In American History - the laws of the journal checked by Columbus, October 10, 1492 - two days before his historic discovery indicates that he was going to continue, and reach his goal with God's help."

S. G. Goodrich in writing his history of America, in 1848, wrote - on October 11th when it appeared to the crew that they were near land, because of drift logs and pieces of vegetation in the water, that Columbus assembled the crew upon the main deck and reminded them of the unspeakable obligations they were under to Almighty God. Who had granted them such favorable weather, and who not withstanding their murmurs had not deserted them.

And when they saw land, the Admiral lifted up his heart and eyes to Heaven. And poured forth thanks and praise to God. It is said, that the crew joined in with him in singing hymns of praise to the Lord. Several authorities state that the first thing they did when they reached the shores of America was to fall down upon their knees in the sands by the seashore, and thank God for his guidance and help.

In his official reports Columbus expressed interest in mission work and in winning them to the Christian faith.

In 1497, John Cabot explored America. He had a chaplain with his group. Who led in praying for God's guidance.

In 1579, Sir Francis Drake on his voyage to the new world also had a chaplain to pray for God's guidance.

It is reported of Balboa in 1513, that when he beheld the majestic waters of the great Pacific, he sank to his knees and gave thanks to God.

April 10, 1606, the first charter of Virginia dated, indicates the primary purpose of the English colony. Of the New World, the Christian religion to such people who as yet lived in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God.

When the forefathers landed in Jamestown, the first month, the first job was - was to erect a church and founded God in American history. "A crude church building was erected the first month, after the settlers landed at Jamestown. It was established by the Virginia company of London. As a business enterprise or adventure. In 1609, the company published a little booklet, on the purpose and the end of the plantation in Virginia. In this booklet, they stated objectives-- first, to preach and baptize into the Christian religion and into the Gospel, and to recover out of the arms of the devil a number of poor and miserable souls wrapped up unto death. In almost invincible ignorance and to add to our might, and to the treasury of Heaven.

Now it has been said that three quarters of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and many other leaders of the infant United States are heirs of the Jamestown Christians. Prayers were made in every parish in English for the colony and for the work in Virginia.

Now these are, but examples, how the early settlers sought God's help. And how God honored them. This is strange, I believe, why God blessed this founding nation.

God's blessings have been seen in other ways. Let me illustrate how God blessed them through their struggle.

As they sought to get free from Britain, after a few years. They decided to separate from England because of their heavy taxes. Now you must remember that there is no human explanation on earth of how America won her independence, except God was in it.

If you think of what America faced even in June of 1776 - first, they were at war. And there was a rebellious colony. And Britain's one aim was to be master over all. Britain was the master of the seven seas. The little Navy of America had just about been smashed, even to the last canoe. Our Army consisted of a few thousand troops scattered all over - from Ca. to Canada. They lacked training and discipline. They had lost at Bunker's Hill. They were also losing at Long Island, N. Y. White Plains, Ft. Washington, and Ft. Lee.

Second, we were somewhat divided. At least a 1/3 of the population of the 13 colonies were opposed to the Revolution. Colonies in the South were suspicious of those in the North. And as one historian wrote, that there was no strong sense of unity. Even though the feeling was there for independence and freedom was running. Every village, every family, and even every church was forced to decide one way or another.

Third, we were weak. Our resources were small. One million 500 thousand population. 1/3 were slaves from Africa. And ammunition was low. The Army faced a shortage of food, clothes, and medicine.

I believe that these elements were enough to defeat any country. But there were three basic qualities - courage, hope, and faith. And this is what brought Americans through. Think of it, the sun never set on the British empire - she was the greatest power on earth. And here was a little hand full of struggling colonial people trying to get their freedom.

Think about the battle at Long Island, over 1,000 of our Revolutionary soldiers were killed. And several of our Generals were captured. Only 9,000 soldiers remained alive. The British had an Army - the Army of the Revolution, so defeated - they just casually waited until the next day to destroy it. During the night George Washington and his leaders met and prayed. They knew that to remain there in that area meant complete disaster. The only route of escape was over the East River, but a storm had been raging for three days. It would be impossible for the army to cross that rough river in small boats. Yet, Mr. Washington, and his leaders knew that was the only hope. And they prayed for help. He marched the 9,000 soldiers to the river, just as they reached the waters edge at 11 P. M., the storm stopped. Not only did it stop raging, but the winds turned and started blowing in the direction so that the boats were blown across to the other side. Toward daylight, it was evident that not all of the 9,000 could get across. The others would be destroyed when the British awoke, and saw they were escaping. What did God do?

Just before daylight, one of the thickest fogs that ever settled in New York covered the area. You could only see a few feet. The British did not realize that the Americans were escaping. When finally the fog lifted in the morning, the Revolutionary Army was miles away before the British realized they were gone. Surely God saved that Army and saved the Revolution at that time.

Another note from a history book tells us that the battle of Trenton - where the Colonial Armies suffered defeat. The British general bragged that on the next day he would completely destroy Washington. And all of his troops, and put the war to an end. It was something of a prospect of victory and they went to sleep knowing that the colonies would be destroyed in the morning. The whole area was flooded by rain and the mud was deep, until he knew that the soldiers of the Revolution could not escape. They could not get their artillery out. They could not even walk in the mud.



But about 12 o'clock at night, it suddenly turned so cold, until in about 2 or 3 hours the whole countryside was frozen into a pavement. Washington and his men slipped out on a hardened mud and escaped, and were miles away when the British realized that they were gone.

I think these two accounts illustrate to us that God had a helping hand in the establishment of this country. God enabled these struggling soldiers of the Revolution to win the victory over the great and mighty empire of a nation largest on earth.

Therefore, God's blessings have been rich towards America. In the second place, have we appreciated the blessings of God. Have we honored him. Have we been faithful unto him, in all that he has done for us. You know that God told Israel that he would bless them if he obeyed Him. But I want you to notice what happens when they did not honor him. And looked to him. V. 19 - He says, if you turn away, in the book of Chron. - and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you. And shall go and serve every God and shall worship them. Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land and this house which I have sanctified for my name, shall I cast out of my sight, and shall make it to be a proverb and a by word among all nations and this house which is high, and shall be an astonishment for everyone that passes by it. So that he shall say why has the Lord done thus, unto this land, and unto this house. And it shall be answered because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers. Which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold upon other Gods and worshipped them and served them. Therefore, hath he brought all of this evil upon them.

Now God said that he was going to bless them if they honored him. But he was going to curse them if they dishonored him. And they did. I wonder if America is honoring God today.

Is America keeping the commandments. As you look at Ex. 20 and look at those Ten Commandments, that's where the children of Israel fell down. And you go today to Jerusalem, and of course you can read the history - and you can look and see that there is no magnificent place of worship to God there. But to other Gods.

Think about V. 3 - thou shalt have no other gods before me. Does anyone need to tell you this morning that America has somewhat turned away from the true God and is worshipping false Gods. Who in this auditorium today would say that there are some other Gods that people worship. God's of gold, God's of pleasure. Gods of sex. A multitude of Gods that are being worshipped today.

The second commandment, thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord thy God in vain. Are we violating that commandment today. Have we become profane - so that most of the radio and T. V. programs today, and most of the literature is filled with profanity. It increases daily. There is hardly a program on television for one hour without somebody's cussing, swearing, taking the name of the Lord in vain.

The next commandment - (discreating the Sabbath.) Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. I know we are not worshipping today on the Old Testament Sabbath. But it is still just as binding upon us today to honor God upon his day. One day in the week to keep his holy day.

And yet, church members even discreate his day. How many church members do you know ignore what God says about the Sabbath.

They will get up and work, and at the least problem they have - it keeps them away from church. But they get well enough to look at television or go to ball games. When Sunday comes, some people don't feel very well so they don't go to church. They could go and sit in a movie for two or three hours. But they just don't feel

like going to church for one hour. Our nation is taking God's day and making it their day. It has become fun day. And no nation can continue to violate God's day, as we do - and get by with it.

Let me ask you a question. What day of the week are more sporting events well attended by more people than any other day. You know - it is Sunday!

What people will line up at the theatres for - more than any other day. It is Sunday!

What day are more people out on the lakes and out on the rivers - it is Sunday!

Some people say, well preacher, Sunday is the only day I have.

Yes, Sunday is one day. But you don't have the Sabbath Day - it belongs to God for his worship! It doesn't belong to you! I believe that God is going to deal with this nation and with us because of this.

✓ V. 12 - (Dishonoring parents.) Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days will be long upon the land which thy Lord thy God giveth thee. Today people call their Daddy the old man. The Mama - the old woman. I don't think people have respect for their parents. Their attitude is, I'll obey my parents if I want too. Now the law, even the law is trying to tell Mothers and Daddy's that they can't punish their own children. And boys and girls, I believe, if they don't punish you - they don't love you.

I remember reading a story once about a preacher who had a boy who always cut up. And one day he told him - now the next time you start misbehaving - when I get

to preaching, I am going to stop, and I am going to take you out behind the church and I am going to give you a flogging. Well, shortly thereafter, the preacher got up and began to preach. And the little boy cut up some and the preacher turned the service over to the chairman of deacons, and he went on out with the boy behind the church. You could hear him screaming. As the licks fell on the little fellow.

The chairman did not know what to do. So he called upon a man to pray. Which is a good thing to do most any time. But it just happened that the man he called on the pray was deaf. He could not hear what was going on behind the church.

And so while the preacher was out there flogging his boy, you could hear him screaming. The dear man prayed, "oh God, bless our pastor in the good work he is now performing."

I think that it is a good thing, if children disobey - that they be given some attention.

✓ V. 13 - Thou shalt not kill, murder. Well, this is something that America is having to face through abortion, and through other things that are being brought to our attention.

✓ The next commandment, thou shalt not commit adultery. And this is a nation that is almost like Sodom and Gomorrah. The immorality, the matter of sex, impurity, X-rated movies - all of these are on the up swing today.

We are condoning what God's word calls sin. What is the American's attitude toward (sex proversion) today. It is accepted and condoned today in our society by many.

We have marches in its behalf. But God's word declares that homosexuality and immorality is wrong.

✓ And in the next verse - thou shalt not steal. And this is going on. Even politicians are stealing. Stealing from their bosses. People steal off of store counters. I think today, this is getting to be a serious problem all over this nation. And if we went on, it says we shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor. You think of the slander and gossip that is put out by people in high places. Much of this in my opinion is pure slander. And I wouldn't mind telling you that many of the books that are being put out today. Some books today are being written about some woman who says that she had sex with Mr. Kennedy. And other high authorities. To me, that is slander, and a false witness because that is some harlot who wants to make some money on selling a book, as she did on selling her body about something that may not be true.

I would say that we have not been honoring God, but God has promised to bless us if we repent.

Now in the final place, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could rediscover what made America great and come back to the old-fashioned things. And discover that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is reproached to any people.

We'd come back to the old-fashioned Bible. What is your ideas about the old-fashioned Bible principles and standards. What do you think the Bible's standard is on drink. The Bible says that wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, and whosoever deceives thereby is not wise. And if a person is not wise, that means he is a fool. The Bible says whoe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink. And putteth the bottle to him and maketh him drunk. So that thou mayest look upon his nakedness.

We need to come back to old-fashioned Bible honesty. It is wrong to lie, to cheat, and to steal. Wrong to bear false-witness, as we have pointed out already.

God promised from the Old Testament, if you sin, I will have to punish you. And God's promises are sure.

The statistics among church members is tragic. 20% never pray. 30% never attend church. 80% never attend prayer meeting. 95% never win a soul to Christ. We need to return to God through church loyalty and get back to him.

We need to call sin - S I N. For when people forsake God, they sin.

Do you want to make America great. Do you want to make our nation great. Would you dare to be free and be righteous people. God's people. Exercising and engaging in righteousness.

That is what we need. We are gone and done for. Church attendance is dwindling all over the nation. Righteous people are becoming smaller and smaller. With every passing year. The restraining force and power is fading away.

Did you want to live in a place where there were no righteous people who would stand up and fight iniquity and take a stand against unrighteousness. I wouldn't want to live in a place like that.

Well, if you wouldn't want to live in a place like that. Then we'd better get back to church and the main things of God. What can an individual do in daring to be free. Gal. 5:1 - so Christ has made us free. Be sure that you stay free and don't get tied up. Again in the chains of slavery of laws and ceremonies.

First, you must recognize that God loves you. The Bible says that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Second, be honest before God. (Admit that you have broken his laws.) And chosen your own way instead of his way. And be willing to let him change your life.

Third, receive Christ Jesus in your heart as your Saviour and Lord.

Fourth, be a living example by good works. James says faith without works is dead. This proves that you mean business with God.

It took a revolution to bring this nation to freedom. But there is another revolution that many of you need to experience. When Jesus Christ enters the life of a man or a woman, he changes it. And that revolution is called the new birth. It could happen to you today. You could become a new person by surrendering your life to Jesus, as your Lord and Saviour. Would you dare to be free?