

Introduction:

- As we go into the celebration of our independence as a nation this weekend, I want to sow into our thoughts and into the generations reminders of our history. We live in a time when men have re-written our American History and have erased anything having to do with God, the Bible and Christianity. I want to remind us this morning that that is not how we started. By sharing some of the thoughts of our Founding Fathers and some of the things that have been taken from us in the last 60 years maybe you will begin to see the precarious place that we are now in.
- John Adams - *"The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God."* - June 28, 1813, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson
- Scripture Reading, Judges 8:22-35: *"As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal-berith their god. They forgot the Lord their God, who had rescued them from all their enemies surrounding them. Nor did they show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon), despite all the good he had done for Israel."* (Judges 8:33-35, NLT) Illustration: Looking back: 1. Great event, super event with lots of learning, painful even I want to forget but if I do I am destined to repeat it. This is my life. As long as I keep looking at them while rowing I will get to my designation. If I stop looking and begin to look at other things I will get off course.

I. It's Not Good To Forget God

- A. From Genesis to Revelation, Biblical history resonates all through the scriptures the accounts of people who forgot God. Not many of those stories ended really well for the people who forgot. It does not matter if you are Adam or church at Laodicea.
 1. Israel and the golden calf. God delivers Israel from Egypt, yeah!!! Before 40 days is up, while Moses is up on Mt Sinai, Israel is worshipping a golden calf.
 2. After each of the judges there is a falling away.
 3. After righteous kings there is a falling away.
- B. Exhortations and warnings about forgetting.
 1. *""But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren."* (Deuteronomy 4:9, NLT)
 - a) This is a call to remembrance what God has done. Where you have come from.
 - b) Pass these things on to your children. Make sure they know your story and your walk with God. Help your children develop their own history with God. II. Teach them to trust...for a new bike, a G.I.Joe, car, a friends salvation.
 2. *"They did not remember his power and how he rescued them from their enemies."* (Psalm 78:42, NLT)

- a) Remembering stirs gratitude.
 - b) Remembering reveals the heart of God towards us
 - c) Remembering keeps us thinking of the possibilities in God.
 - d) Remembering lead to praise to God.
- C. Consequences of forgetting.
1. *"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."* (Proverbs 14:12, NLT)
 2. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23, NLT)
 3. *"And when they forgot the Lord their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them."* (1 Samuel 12:9, NKJV) To forget God is to become a slave of sin and sin leads to all kinds of death.
 4. Prosperity has a way of deceiving people into forgetting God. That is why you see so many generations in history whose parents have sacrificed to prosper while their kids became 'entitled'. Those children have no sense of the price that has been paid.

II. American Roots Of Faith

A. Columbus

1. "The man was much more complex than the stories often reveal. Christopher was a very devout Catholic who observed all the fasts of the church and prayed regularly. His very name Christopher, which means Christ-bearer, he understood as a title of his destiny to carry the message of the gospel to far-off lands.
2. We know from his writings that he diligently searched the Scriptures and thought he found assurance for a call to sail to the far reaches of the globe with the Christian message. Zechariah 9:10 said that *"he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."* And Psalm 107:23-24 promised that *"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."*
3. "When land was sighted on this day October 12, 1492, in recognition of the divine aid in his voyage, Columbus named the land San Salvador, which means Holy Savior, and prayed: *O Lord, Almighty and everlasting God, by Thy holy Word Thou hast created the heaven, and the earth, and the sea; blessed and glorified be Thy Name, and praised be Thy Majesty, which hath designed to use us, Thy humble servants, that Thy holy Names may be proclaimed in this second part of the earth.* Bandelier, Ad. F. "Christopher Columbus." *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton, 1914.
4. "In keeping with the Christian motive underlying his mission, Columbus at first showed great concern for how the natives, whom he called Indians, were treated. He

wrote, So that they might be well-disposed towards us, for I knew that they were a people to be delivered and converted to our holy faith rather by love than by force, I gave to some red caps and to others glass beads, which they hung around their neck, and many other things...I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it seemed to me that they had no religion of their own." Christopher Columbus. Christian History Magazine #35.

B. Pilgrims 1620- Mayflower - Tracy McKenzie, professor and author, Wheaton College.

1. The belief that the Pilgrims came to America in search of religious freedom is inspiring, but it's not true. Religious persecution caused the Pilgrims to move from England to Holland in 1608. By their own account, Holland was a place where God had blessed them with "much peace and liberty."
2. They left Holland for two major reasons (1) They found it a hard place to raise their children because Dutch culture was too permissive. "Pilgrim William Bradford commented on "the great licentiousness of youth" in Holland and lamented the "evil examples" and "manifold temptations of the place." (2) an even harder place to make a living.
3. The term pilgrim, has been forgotten. It means - one who is on a journey. It has the understanding that this world is not our home. Abraham was a pilgrim, Ps 84:5 refers to us as pilgrims. Peter calls believers pilgrims, foreigners just passing through.
4. Mayflower Compact - "Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia, do by these present solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

C. Puritans - 1630s- Ken Curtis Phd. Church History; *Who Were The Puritans?*

1. "First came the Pilgrims in the 1620s. They were followed by thousands of Puritans in the 1630s, and these Puritans left their mark on their new land, becoming the most dynamic Christian force in the American colonies. Back in England, the Puritans had been people of means and political influence, but King Charles would not tolerate their attempts to reform the Church of England. Persecution mounted. To many there seemed no hope but to leave England. Perhaps in America they could establish a colony whose government, society, and church were all based upon the Bible. "New England" could become a light Old England could follow out of the darkness of corruption.

2. "Puritans" had been a name of ridicule first used during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. These were Christians who wanted the Church of England purified of any liturgy, ceremony, or practices which were not found in Scripture. The Bible was their sole authority, and with these beliefs, they believed it applied to every area and level of life."
 3. A fortuitous loophole/ "coincidence?" - When King Charles granted a colonial charter to the Massachusetts Bay Company, the document failed to specify that the governor and officers of the company had to remain in England. The Puritan stockholders took advantage of this silence and agreed to move the company and the whole government of the colony to America. There they would try to establish a biblical community, a holy commonwealth, as an example to England and the world.
 4. New England: A New Way In the mother country, every Englishman was part of the national church of England. In New England, only the converted were members of the church. Only those individuals whose lives had been changed by belief in the gospel of Christ were accepted into the church. Men who were church members were given the right to vote in the colony. They were expected to establish rules for a godly social order, a society which would glorify God. As the Mosaic Law had regulated Israel's society in Old Testament days, so the church under the Scripture's authority would regulate New England's society. The church was the center of their community, providing purpose and direction to their lives.
 5. Regarding Education: "The instruction and training of children were considered heavy responsibilities, and parents prayed that children would become a source of glory to their Lord. Within five years after its founding, Massachusetts established schools for children. Every child should learn to read so he could read the Bible. As one Massachusetts law stated, "It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures...schools should be established." In 1636 the colony established Harvard College, especially to train ministers.
- D. First Great Awakening - 1730s
1. Over the next 100 years these colonists forgot God. England began sending convicts, and societies dregs to the New Land. Men's hearts cooled toward God and by the 1720 only 5% of Americas population was in church on any given Sunday.
 2. It was in this setting that George Whitfield began preaching. And America caught fire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I bring this to our attention because those who would later frame our nations constitution were greatly touched by this revival.
- E. Our Founding Father's
1. Answering the deceptions. Many current teachers of history speak of the Founding Fathers as corrupt, deists who had very little to say about God. "Political Science professors at the University of Houston wondered if there was something unique

about the government of the US. They gathered 15,000 quotes from the founders and located where they all came from." Here is what they found: the main sources of influence of the founding fathers were Blackstone, Montesquieu, and John Locke. They found the Bible 4 times more than Montesquieu, 12 times more than Blackstone, and 16 times more than Locke. 34% were straight from the Bible. Another 90% had their origin in the Bible. David Barton, Americas Godly Heritage.

2. George Washington in reference to the newly forming Continental army: "*To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian.*" David Barton, America Godly Heritage.
3. George Mason was one of the Founding Fathers that insisted on the Bill of Rights, or the first ten amendments, to be added to the Constitution, saying regarding his decision that, "*The laws of nature are the laws of God, whose authority can be superseded by no power on earth.*" Douglas Gibbs US Constitution and Biblical Principals.
4. "Benjamin Franklin, the lone member of the group of founders that claimed to be anything but religious, attended every kind of Christian worship, called for public prayer, and contributed to all denominations. In fact, when the Constitutional Convention was finding itself stalling, and the members of the convention were arguing to the point that it was nearly coming to blows, Ben Franklin was the one that proposed that the delegation pray before each session of the Constitutional Convention. He Franklin stated, "*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 men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?*" Douglas Gibbs US Constitution and Biblical Principals. (See July 2015 notes for far more quotes.)

F. Out Courts

1. Blackstone's Commentary on the Law, introduced in 1758, became a law textbook for lawyers for 160 years and the Supreme court quoted it to settle cases. It gave Bible verse reference to the law. For example
 - a) Three branches of government - Is 33:22
 - b) Separation of powers based on Jer 17
 - c) Tax exempt status for Churches Ezra 7:24.
 - d) While Charles Finney was studying to be a lawyer he became a Christian! And a powerful leader of the second great awaking in America.
2. Supreme Court 1844 Vidal vs Girard: A Philadelphia school wanted to teach morals with out using the Bible. The Court ruled: "Why may not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, be read and taught as a divine revelation in the schools? Where can the purest principals of morality be learned so clearly or perfectly as from the NT." David Barton

3. Supreme Court 1892, Church of the Holy Trinity vs. US: The court ruled: "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teaching of the Redeemer of mankind, and it's impossible that it should be otherwise: and in this sense and to this extent our civilizations and our institutions are emphatically Christian." D. Barton
 4. Supreme Court 1811, People vs. Juggles. A man who made attacks on Jesus in a blasphemous way, the case made it to the Supreme Court which ruled: "Whatever strikes at the root of Christianity tends manifestly to the dissolution of civil government." They reasoned that if you attack Jesus, you have attacked Christianity, and if you have attacked Christianity, you have attacked the foundation of the US. Therefore an attack on Jesus or Christianity was an attack on the foundation of the US.
 5. Supreme Court 1796, Runnel vs. Winemiller. Court Ruled: "By our form of government the Christian religion is the established religion, and all sects and denominations of Christians are placed on the same equal footing."
 - a) This was challenged a couple of times.
 - b) 1853 a group challenged the separation of Christian principles from government. The House Judiciary Committee responded: "Had the people during the revolution, had any suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that revolution would have been strangle in its cradle." From David Barton
- G. I hope you can see God in our history as a nation was not just a 'novel idea' it was a defining root of who we are called to be.

III. The Spiral Down

- A. Supreme Court 1947 Everson vs Board of Education: The Court: "The 1st Amendment erected a wall between Church and State. That wall must be kept high and impregnable." The court used 8 words of a letter written by Jefferson whose point was to keep government out of religion, not religion out of government.
- B. Supreme Court June 25, 1962 Engle vs. Vitale: The Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to pray in school. The case was over a 22 word prayer: "We acknowledge our dependence on thee, and we beg thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country." This ruling had no prior historical or legal base. Yet according to all prior legal decisions it was in violation the constitution!
- C. 1963 two more court rulings take prayer out of school. What happened in 1962-63 was a RADICAL REVERSAL of everything that had happened up to that point. It is figured at the time that only 3% of the population agreed with the Court.
- D. 1965 The Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional for a student to pray aloud.
- E. 1980 Passive displays of God that might cause one to think of God are now unconstitutional.

- F. It was George Washington our First American President who said in warning, *"Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."* He was stating that you will lose national morality when you reject religious principles found in the Bible.

Conclusion:

- James Madison, one of our founding fathers who was most influential and responsible for our constitution, *"We have staked the whole future of American civilization not on the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves according to the 10 commandments of God."* From David Barton, America's Godly Heritage.
- Thomas Jefferson, *"The reason Christianity is the best friend of government is because Christianity is the only religion in the world that deals with the heart."* From David Barton, America's Godly Heritage.
- America is still a great nation but I am very concerned for her. When a nation forgets God it does not go well for her or for her people.
- The best thing we can do is to make Jesus Lord of our life, govern our lives by his teachings, and advance the Gospel on our land.