

Introduction:

- Welcome the children to Generational Sunday.
- Happy Birthday America!!! 242 Years! On July 4th 1776 in the city of Philadelphia, 56 brave men sign a document entitled the "Declaration of Independence". These 56 men in this document literally pledged their lives to this cause. *"With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."*
- Our freedom is never free! It is always purchased at a great price.
- And with our Freedom comes responsibility.

I. Freedom Is Never Free

A. Why is there a price to freedom?

1. Because you were a slave to someone or something else. When you are a slave, someone owns you. You have no rights and most slaves are horribly mistreated. I.e. black man in our history, some migrant workers today, human trafficking. Someone owns you. I.E. Chains, illustrate slave owner, purchaser who pays the price.
 - a) When you are a slave to sin, sin owns you. The devil owns you.
 - b) I.e. Slave to sin. The devil owns you. You are a prisoner of hell. That is why Freedom always has a price, someone else owns you. Freedom is never free, it costs!
 - c) If the devil owns you, you have no moral obligation to right living.
2. That is why Paul could say: *"When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right."* (Romans 6:20, NLT) From the Message Bible, *"As long as you did what you felt like doing, ignoring God, you didn't have to bother with right thinking or right living, or right anything for that matter."* (Romans 6:20)

B. Our freedom cost God His one and only son.

1. *"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, NLT)
2. Sin. Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, freedom has always come at a price. In the Garden of Eden an animal had to die to cover the shame of Adam and Eves nakedness. I.e. The cost was the life of (what I believe) was a lamb in the garden.

C. Our freedom cost Jesus His life.

1. Jesus is called the Lamb of God in scripture. This is why Paul says, *"God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world."* (1 Corinthians 7:23, NLT)
2. *"And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death."* (Romans 8:2, NLT)
3. I.E. Justice of God satisfied, devil pushed/knocked out! out.

D. The freedom we have in America was not free it cost men their lives. American colonists lived under the tyranny of England.

1. Founding Fathers, those 56 signer of the declaration of independence.

2. "Most of those men paid dearly for their passion for freedom and individual liberty. Five were captured and tortured before their deaths. Twelve had their homes sacked, looted and occupied by the enemy or destroyed. Two lost sons in battle. One had two sons captured. Nine died during the war from its hardships or from its bullets. Was their sacrifice worth the atrocities that came upon them? Ironically that question is ours to answer. How we live and the passion for freedom and liberty that we demonstrate will ultimately answer that question." James Draper Jr.
3. We have a responsibility to the freedom we have been given. Like Jesus freeing us from sin, we now have a responsibility to right living. And it is in right living that we experience the most freedom. So with Freedom come responsibility.

II. With Freedom Comes Responsibility

- A. We have an obligation to live right. Listen to Paul the apostle thoughts. "Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living." (Romans 6:18, NLT) "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1, NKJV)
- B. The Golden Triangle: "In his book, "A Free People's Suicide," Os Guinness has written about what the Founders called the "Golden Triangle of Freedom." Simply put, Freedom requires Virtue. Virtue requires Faith. And Faith requires Freedom." Eric Metaxas. see also: <https://rzim.org/just-thinking/the-golden-triangle-of-freedom/>
 1. What is virtue?
 - a) It is moral excellence. It is goodness.
 - b) It is right living and doing what is right.
 - c) A virtuous nation is one that holds a standard of moral excellence and goodness.
 - d) Freedom requires that we live a virtuous life. It requires that we live as good people. If we do not live as good people we go back into slavery. Gal 5:1.
 2. Why does freedom require virtue? Remember we are talking about, Freedom requires responsibility.
 - a) Why does freedom require virtue? Because freedom means we must govern our own lives. This is why the Word of God is important to us as Christians because it reveals to us how to live and how to govern our lives as free people. Free from sin. And free from sins bondage.
 - b) As Americans living in a republic (not democracy) freedom means self-government. It means we must govern ourselves well. Because our government is of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore it requires self government.
 - c) And how are the people to govern themselves if they have no virtue? If we have no virtue, we will live for ourselves and elect people who will give us what we want? IE.

Isn't it clear that the more virtuous a people is, the fewer policemen we need? The fewer prisons we'll need to build? The fewer shootings we will have.

3. Quotes from Founding Father on the importance of freedom needing virtue:
 - a) John Adams famously said our government was not armed *"with power sufficient to contend with human passions unbridled by morality and religion . . . Our Constitution,"* he said, *"was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*
 - b) 19th century French historian, Alex DeTocqueville after studying the US in its infancy particularly its churches and pulpits "afire with righteousness" wrote, *"America is great because America is good; and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."*
 - c) Noah Webster *"The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."* P33 Rebirth.
 - d) Benjamin Franklin as a freethinker, writing to Ezra Stiles in 1790, made clear that he would never become a Christian, yet stated this: *"As to Jesus of Nazareth, my Opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the System of Morals and his Religion, as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw or is likely to see."*
 - e) Thomas Jefferson, *"Can the liberties of a nation be secure, when we have removed the conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"* p.24 Rebirth
 4. So Freedom requires Virtue. But does Virtue require Faith? The answer is both 'yes and no' but 'yes' is the stronger of the two.
 - a) Not always. There are many people who are believers, yet corrupt. And there are many people who have no religion and are virtuous.
 - b) But generally speaking, those who put their faith in God and live according to His word, tend to be more virtuous than those who do not, or those who believe they can make whatever laws they like and submit to no one.
 5. The third leg of the triangle, Faith Requires Freedom, is the simplest to understand. Attempts to curtail the religious freedom that makes our freedoms possible is what Os rightly called "suicide." And just as any decent person would try to dissuade someone from killing himself, Christians must oppose the current attempts to kill the source of their freedom.
- C. With Freedom comes the need for responsibility.
1. That responsibility is self-governance.
 2. Self-governance is best accomplished by faith in God.
 3. Faith requires freedom. And that is given to us by God.

III. Freedom Requires Two Things

A. That a price be paid.

1. You were bought with a price...the blood of Jesus. Live free. Do not go back into bondage.
2. The freedom we have as a nation is beautiful. But it came at a price. Yet, we must honor that freedom and not let us go back into bondage.

B. That we live responsibly once we have been made free.

1. Choose to be a morally excellent people who reflect the Kingdom of God.
2. What makes you and wonderful person and America a wonderful nation is how we manage and protect our freedom...personally, corporately and nationally.

C. Put your faith in Jesus!

Conclusion:

- "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." Os Guinness
- *"then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."* (Deuteronomy 6:12, NKJV) *"And beware lest you say in your [mind and] heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth."* (Deuteronomy 8:17, AMP)

VIRTUE REQUIRES FAITH

If the framers' position on virtue is suspect today and needs to pass through stringent intellectual security checks, how much more so their views on religion. Indeed, they are an open battleground, and all the earlier qualifications about virtue need to be underscored once again, and others added (the founders were not all people of faith; they had very different views of the relationship of religion and public life, for example). Yet the overall evidence for what they argued is again massive and unambiguous, even from some of the more unlikely sources such as Jefferson and Paine: the founders believed that if freedom requires virtue, *virtue in turn requires faith* (of some sort).

"If Men are so wicked as we now see them with Religion," Benjamin Franklin said, "what would they be without it?"⁴⁰

"It is impossible to account for the creation of the universe without the agency of a Supreme Being," George Washington wrote, "and it is impossible to govern the universe without the aid of a Supreme Being."⁴¹

"We have no government armed with powers capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion," John Adams wrote. "Avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."⁴²

“Should our Republic ever forget this fundamental precept of governance,” John Jay wrote about the importance of faith for virtue, “men are certain to shed their responsibilities for licentiousness and this great experiment will surely be doomed.”⁴³

“The only surety for a permanent foundation of virtue is religion,” Abigail Adams wrote. “Let this important truth be engraved upon your heart.”⁴⁴

“Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure,” Thomas Jefferson wrote, “when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are violated but with his wrath? I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep for ever.”⁴⁵

“Is there no virtue among us?” James Madison asked. “If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks— no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government can secure liberty or happiness without virtue in the people is a chimerical idea.”⁴⁶

“The wise politician,” Alexander Hamilton wrote, “knows that morality overthrown (and morality must fall with religion), the terrors of despotism can alone curb the impetuous passions of man, and confine him within the bounds of social duty.”⁴⁷

Did this emphasis on religion mean that the framers were arguing for an official “Christian America”? Not at all. Unquestionably most Americans at the time of the revolution were either Christians or from a Christian background, and most American ideas were directly or indirectly rooted in the Jewish and Christian faiths. Thus even Franklin as a freethinker, writing to Ezra Stiles in 1790, made clear that he would never become a Christian, yet stated this: “As to Jesus of Nazareth, my Opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the System of Morals and his Religion, as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw or is likely to see.”⁴⁸

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