

The New Testament Church
Liberty, Prayer, Fasting and Patriot's Day – Isaiah 57:15
Pastor Paul Jehle – April 16, 2023

I The Right to Liberty – why humility is the key to Preserving Liberty

- A. The origin of liberty – Genesis 1:28
 1. The right and responsibility to replenish the earth – to “be full”
 2. Creativity – fill in a different form – responsible self-control from within
- B. The Law of Liberty – Genesis 2:16-17
 1. Liberty is neither lawless (anarchy) nor forced (tyranny) but under God's law
 2. Galatians 5:1 – *Stand fast in the Liberty, where Christ has made us free ...*
 3. External liberty in society is sustained by Christ working in the hearts of believers
 4. Just as believers sustain it by example, so believers caught in pride cause it to diminish
- C. Heart of the matter – Isaiah 57:15 – *I dwell... with him who has a contrite and humble spirit*
 1. The closer we want to get to God, the deeper the humility and brokenness needed
 2. The key to preserving liberty is continually recognizing our dependence on God
 3. *The tendency is to take credit for what God has done, rising in pride and vengeance*
- D. American Liberty: built on the model of Biblical liberty
 1. *The internal is causative to the external* – liberty is an expression of the heart
 2. The Church (clergy) taught that God was sovereign, government limited, and jurisdictions of the family, church and self-government the key to true liberty
 3. Civil disobedience was personal and familial (self-defense), as well as resisting under the authority of the lower magistrate (militia's traced to Israel)
 4. Only a defensive war was justified; so from 1765-1775 the clergy and colonial magistrates *sought reconciliation, redress of grievances, and boycotted to avoid conflict.*
 5. In addition to the two to three sermons per week by the clergy, *proclamations for prayer and fasting from ecclesiastical and civil leaders exhorted self-examination.*

II How Patriot's Day was built on the Biblical doctrine of liberty and how to sustain it

- A. Commemorates April 19, 1775 and the conflict on Lexington Green – established 1894
 1. But the inauguration of Patriot's Day in 1894 was an extension of the Spring Fast Day
 2. Starting with the Pilgrims, calling days of fasting and prayer was sporadic as needed
 3. In 1694, on April 19, the first annual prayer and fast day was called in Massachusetts
- B. Prayer/Fast Days common – 300 in New England by 1820's, 1,000+ in colonies by 1880
 1. Jonas Clark, pastor in Lexington, 700 inhabitants, militia under Deacon Parker
 2. Drafted Stamp Act resistance, preached to militias, authored state papers...
 3. Taught his congregation the purpose of government, liberty and a defensive war
 4. Providentially two fast days called April 15 (Hancock) and April 19 (Trumbull)
- C. April 19, 1775 – *I have trained them for this very hour!* (Jonas Clark)
 1. Put yourself in their position, 45 families represented on the Green that day:
 - a. Buckman, Muzzey, Munroe, JParker, Estabrook, and Harrington to name a few
 - b. You are not to fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here
 2. His anniversary sermon of 1776, and the fast day from Congress, make the same point
 3. *God's sovereignty allows evil, and our hearts must be tender to accept His choices*
- D. It was also the Clergy that ended the Fast Day in 1893!
 1. Begun in 1855 and then in 1892, *civil government secular, churches are righteous*
 2. But Governor Greenhalge said Patriot's Day should still be *solemn, religious, with gratitude to Almighty God... who crowned our founders with victory and peace.*
 3. Patriot's Day didn't really replace prayer and fasting, it is the basis of patriotism!

Key Quotes used in the Sermon

Historian George Bancroft (1878) - *Their names are had in grateful remembrance, and the expanding millions of their countrymen renew and multiply their praise from generation to generation. They fulfilled their duty not from the accidental impulse of the moment; their action was the slowly ripened fruit of Providence and of time.*"

Militia Oath - *We trust in God, that should the state of our affairs require it, we shall be ready to sacrifice our estates and everything dear in life, yea, and life itself, in support of the common cause.*"

April 15, 1775... the Massachusetts Provincial Congress (John Hancock) *"In circumstances dark as these, it becomes us, as men and Christians, to reflect that, whilst every prudent measure should be taken to ward off the impending judgments... a Day of Public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer...to confess the sins...to implore the Forgiveness of all our Transgression."*

April 19, 1775, (Governor Trumbull, CT), *"God would graciously pour out His Holy Spirit on us to bring us to a thorough repentance and effectual reformation that our iniquities may not be our ruin; that He would restore, preserve and secure the liberties of this and all the other British American colonies, and make the land a mountain of Holiness, and habitation of righteousness forever."*

Pastor Jonas Clark, April 19, 1776; *"However unjust, or cruel the oppressor, and those that thirst for blood may be, in contriving and carrying into execution their wicked, oppressive, or bloody designs, they are no other than instruments in providence and the rod in the hand of the great Governor of the world, for the reproof and correction of His people."*

"However unjust our sufferings may be from man; yet, when we realize the hand of God, the great wise Governor of the world, as concerned herein, silence and submission is our indispensable duty, and no murmur, or complaint ought every to be heard, but we reverence and in humility it becomes us to bow before the Lord..."

(He will) bring good out of evil... by the over-ruling hand of Providence... There is no just ground to suppose, that it would have ever entered the heart of Americans, to have desired a dissolution of so happy a connection with the Mother-Country, or to have sought independence of Britain, had they not been urged, and even forced upon such an expedient, by measures of oppression and violence, and the shedding of innocent blood..."

Continental Congress Prayer and Fast Day, July, 1775 - *"...to forgive our iniquities, to remove our present calamities, to avert those desolating judgments, with which we are threatened, and to bless our rightful sovereign, King George the third... That virtue and true religion may revive and flourish throughout our land; And that all America may soon behold a gracious interposition of Heaven."*

Governor Greenhalge, April 11, 1894 *"It may well be called Patriot's Day... Let the day be dedicated, then, to solemn, religious, and patriotic services... especially our gratitude to Almighty God, who crowned the heroic struggles of the founders and preservers of our country with victory and peace."*