

Freedom Drifts Away

Text : **Matt. 22: 15-21 & Rom. 13: 1-7**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. We will approach this lesson just a little differently than we usually do.**
1. We will be quoting secular sources more than is normal for us.
 2. However, in doing so our goal remains totally spiritual in nature.
 3. We will quote some politicians, **but** the lesson has no political point to make.
 4. As we approach this subject we are assuming you are spiritually mature enough to listen with spiritual ears seeking a spiritual application.
 - a. There is a spiritual application to every secular quote we will use.
 - b. There is NO secular point to this lesson ... neither spoken nor inferred.
- B. On this day in 1776 our forefathers wrote a document declaring that the colonies were transferring their dependence and their loyalty from King George III to God alone. (King George wrote in his diary, "Nothing of consequence happened today.")**
1. This was an overt rejection of the King's sovereignty over them.
 2. The king took this as a declaration of war and sent troops to suppress the rebellion.
 3. The revolutionary war was the result.
- C. This mirrors the actions of Adam and Eve in the garden.**
1. By eating the forbidden fruit they rejected the authority of God to rule over them.
 2. God responded to their rebellion by driving them out of the garden. (*fellowship*)
 3. This is why Romans 5 refers to man as enemies of God and objects of His wrath.
- D. This holiday marks only the time we declared our independence from England.**
1. Independence was not achieved until 6 years of struggle.
 2. That struggle cost the fortunes of some of the richest men in the colonies.
 3. It pitted friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor and father against son.
 4. Many battles were fought and great numbers of people were killed.

The American revolutionary war continued for 6 years until the British surrendered at Yorktown on October 19, 1781.

But man's rebellion against God continues until this very day and it will not end until Jesus returns to take the loyalist home with Him to Heaven, imprisons all rebels in Hell and destroys the world in fire.

I. Freedom is never free to obtain or to maintain.

A. The signers of the Declaration of Independence did so thinking they were signing their own death warrants.

ILL. - Elbridge Gerry who was sitting beside Samuel Chase leaned over and ask Chase if he was willing to risk his vast fortune by signing the declaration. The 250 lb. Chase replied, "*It is you who will have the more difficult time. With your slight build you are likely to keep dangling about on the gallows whereas I will suffer but for a moment.*"

B. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence few escaped great loss.

1. 5 were captured and tortured to death.
2. Hoping to spare his family, Francis Lewis stayed away from his house, but when the British came, they took his wife and imprisoned her in the hold of a ship where they tortured and starved her. George Washington captured the wives of two British officers and negotiated a prisoner exchange, but Mrs. Lewis died from her abuse.
3. 9 of the signers were wounded or killed on the battle field.
4. 2 lost a son in the war and 1 lost both his sons
5. 12 had their home and other buildings burned.
6. When a British general (Lord Cornwall) commandeered the mansion of Virginia Governor, Thomas Nelson, to be his headquarters, Nelson prevailed upon Gen. Washington to destroy it with artillery. Nelson never recovered from the loss.
7. Carter Braxton loaned 10,000 lbs to the Continental Congress. He owned a fleet of ships which were all hunted down by the empire and sunk. He died in poverty.
8. Joseph Hewes donated his fleet of ships to be used by the Continental Army.
9. Robert Morris used his considerable personal fortune to prop up the fledgling government and, as a result, died in poverty.
10. Justice Richard Stockton was captured and imprisoned until several years after the war. He lost all he possessed (writings, library, property) and died a pauper.

*** More than a million men have since died to preserve the freedoms these brave men gave so much to obtain for us.**

What are YOU doing to resist the steady erosion of our religious freedoms that is plaguing us today as never before ?

Sam Adams once said, "*The liberties of our country, the freedoms of our civil constitution are worth defending against all hazards and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks.*"

II. Spiritual freedom is no less costly than civil freedoms.

A. The cost of eternal spiritual freedom is as great as its value.

1. Unlike the King of England, the King of Heaven did not seek to suppress the rebellion against Him and rule by force.
 - a. God could easily force man to do His bidding.
 - b. The universal flood proved His ability to conquer any adversary.
 - c. The story of Jonah demonstrates His ability to coerce compliance to His will.
2. The Sovereign Ruler of the Universe gave His Only Begotten Son to :
 - a. Rescue us from the wrath to come.
 - b. Bring us safely back to Him.
3. Thus, when Christians are commanded to love their enemies, they are being commanded to do as God does.

B. In the end God must punish those who rebel and reject His rule over their lives.

1. **II Pet. 3:9**- The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
2. **Nahum 1:3a** - The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.
3. **Isaiah 30: 18**- Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. (cf.- **Ez. 33: 11**)

C. What price are you willing to pay for the gift of spiritual freedom.

1. Our forefathers committed all to secure freedom in this earthly realm.
2. Jesus committed all to secure eternal freedom for us.
3. What have you committed to secure your freedom in this realm or the next.
 - a. In **Acts 5: 1-13** God taught us the consequences of a hypocritical commitment.
 - b. In **Luke 14: 25-35** Jesus taught us of the extent of the commitment He requires.
 - c. In **I Cor. 6: 19-20** Paul taught us the result of the commitment. (cf- **II Cor. 5: 14f**)

D. As our forefathers stood in the face of the king's wrath to secure civil freedoms, so Christians must stand in the face of the prince of this world for the spiritual.

1. **Matt. 10: 32-33** .. Our eternal salvation depends upon our being willing to speak out for Christ in the face of opposition.

2. **I Pet. 3: 14-15** .. Because Christians accept Jesus as their ruler, they put forth effort to learn how to defend and advance the gospel.
3. **Rev. 2: 10** .. They will stand firm and hold God's ground even if it costs their lives.
 - a. **Luke 12: 1-12** .. They sound forth the teachings of Jesus regardless of repercussions.
 - b. **Phil. 1: 21-22** .. They view their life as a tool in the hand of Christ.

II. Freedom must be defended or it will be lost.

A. Our forefathers often warned about the failure to protect freedom.

1. Andrew Jackson - 1837
You must remember my fellow citizens that eternal vigilance by the people is the price of liberty and that you must pay the price if you wish to secure the blessing. It behooves you therefore to be watchful in your states as well as in your federal government.
2. Patrick Henry – 1775
Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the cost of chains and slavery? Forbid it oh God. I know not what course others will take but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.
3. Thomas Jefferson – 1787
The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. God forbid we should ever be 20 years without a revolution. What country can preserve their liberty if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people possess the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.
4. Benjamin Franklin –
They that can give up essential liberties to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

*** In spite of their warnings we are setting timidly by while our religious freedoms are being stripped away one by one. We must use our civil liberties to secure our religious rights.**

B. The liberties for which our forefathers fought included religious freedom.

1. At the beginning of the 1900s those who seek to completely secularize America started a movement to change how people viewed the constitution.
 - a. To bring about this new perception, history had to be revised.
 - b. The founding fathers had to be redefined. (*Revisionist History*)
 - c. The original intent of the constitution had to be perverted.
2. The religious nature of our national heritage is being erased.
3. Courts are being used to redefine the constitutional protects of religion.

C. The founders of this country believed in God and believed it was a function of government to promote religion, but not to promote any one denomination. They did not want an official national religion like the countries in Europe.

1. Patrick Henry –
“Our country was founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
2. George Washington –
“Religion and morality are the essential pillars of a civil society.”
3. John Adams – (framer & second president)
 - a. *“The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of government on the principle of Christianity.”*
 - b. *“Our constitution is made only for moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the governing of any other.”*
 - c. *“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passion unbridled by morality and religion.”*

*** This has proven to be true. Since the 1962 decision banning prayer in schools :**

- 1 – We now have metal detectors at entrances and police presence in schools.
- 2 – Criminal arrests of teens is up 150%
- 3 – Teen unwed mothers are up 500% (after condoms and abortions)
- 4 – Child abuse is up 2300%
- 5 – Teen suicide is up 450%
- 6 – The use of illegal drugs is up 6000%
- 7 – S.A.T. scores are down 10%

D. It was the purpose of our founders to create a “Christian Nation.”

1. They were very religious men.
 - a. 29 of the signers of the Declaration of Independence had Theology degrees.
 - b. More than half of the signers were the preachers for a congregation.
 - c. George Washington’s farewell address : (1796)
Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. ... And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.
2. Our original government leaders did religious things as a function of government.
 - a. The very first official act of the congress was to appoint a Chaplin. (**Still have one**)
 - b. The 2nd official act was to purchase 20,000 bibles for use in converting the Indians.

3. In 1782 our congress commissioned the printing of a bible.
 - a. This was the first English bible printed in America.
 - b. The British had made it against the law to print bibles in the colonies.
 - c. The inscription in the congressional edition read :
Where upon resolve that the United States in Congress assembled recommend their edition of the bible to the inhabitants of the United States of America.
4. In 1787 congress passed and Pres. Washington signed the “Northwest Ordinance” in which article 3 required the teaching of religion in the schools of the territories.
5. Benjamin Rush who wrote the 1st Amendment to the Constitution also wrote :
“The bible must be at the center of public education.”
 - * **If anyone knew the intent of the 1st Amendment, Mr. Rush did. He wrote it.**
 (Compare the Massachusetts “Old Deluder Satan Law of 1647”)

CONCLUSION :

The liberties our founders fought and died to give us are in danger as never before ?

- A. **The church is directly affected by the modern attacks on our religious freedoms.**
 1. The loss of religious freedoms affects our ability to practice our faith.
 2. The loss of religious freedoms affects our ability to raise our children in the faith.
 3. The loss of religious freedoms affects our ability to reach the lost with the gospel.
- B. **Every Christian is responsible to God to do all that he can to advance the plan of God on the earth.**
 1. Each of us will stand before God to give an account for “**his deeds in the body.**”
 2. Thus, each of us must ask himself what he can do to protect his liberties.
 3. Each of us must also ask himself what is he doing with his religious liberties.
- C. **Liberties are of no value unless one uses them.**
 - * **There is no one so blind as the man who will not see.** (*Illiterate .. will not read*)
 - 1. Jesus died to purchase your freedom.
 - 2. Declare your independence from sin.
 - 3. Live free. (**Rom. 6**)

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :

Matthew 22: 15-21

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said. **16** And they *sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. **17** "Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" **18** But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? **19** "Show Me the coin *used* for the poll-tax." And they brought Him a denarius. **20** And He *said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" **21** They *said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He *said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."

Romans 13: 1-7

1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. **3** For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; **4** for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. **5** Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. **6** For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. **7** Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.