

## GOD BLESS AMERICA

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

\* July 4, 2004

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**“This great anniversary ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty.”** These words were written by John Adams, our second President and one of the crafters of the Declaration of Independence, on July 4, 1776. It is right that we worship God on this great anniversary of our nation’s deliverance by God – even as we celebrate our personal deliverance by God in Christ.

“Independence Day” though is a misleading phrase – our forefathers and foremothers actually declared we are “in dependence” upon God and we are “interdependent” upon one another. Our Declaration of Independence ends with these words: **“...with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”** “Firm reliance” means to be dependent upon God; “mutually pledge” means to be dependent upon one another. Samuel Adams - John’s cousin who organized the Boston Tea Party and is known as “the father of the American War for Independence” – said this as he signed the Declaration of Independence: **“We have this day restored the True Sovereign to whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven, and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come.”**

Sadly revisionists have changed the way our forefathers and foremothers are remembered. Have you ever heard taught the words of (“Give me liberty or give me death”) Patrick Henry: **“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”** Or the words of George Washington: **“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”** Or the words of Benjamin Franklin: **“Whosoever shall introduce into public affairs the principles of Christianity will change the face of the world.”** (Or the words of Horace Walpole to the British Parliament: **“I fix all the blame of these extraordinary proceedings upon the Presbyterians!”**) Or that while Thomas Jefferson was President the largest church service in America took place every Sunday in the Capitol building...with the President in attendance? Or that when the British fleet bombarded Boston in 1774, the first act of the Continental Congress was a time of prayer.

Then, as now, America is predominantly Christian...nominally Christian, but Christian nonetheless. We may protect and respect the variety of faiths that are here – but the vast majority of Americans, over 80% according to The Wall Street Journal, say they are Christian. And the Christian faith of our forefathers and foremothers was indispensable in the founding of America. Nowhere do we see this more vividly than in the person of George Washington. He was not perfect, but he was a devout Christian. Common sense told him, “No way could the Continental Army, a band of amateurs who can’t even afford uniforms, defeat the greatest fighting force in the world.” But George Washington found in the Scriptures a tiny group of people who had risen up against a tyrant named Pharaoh. God had taken the side of the lowly against the mighty. So George Washington commanded that every morning his officers would lead their men in prayer. He also commanded that soldiers would not be allowed to use profanity. George Washington knew that the colonist’s only hope was the supernatural intervention of God. There were many “God things” that occurred throughout the war. None were more amazing than what happened on August 28, 1776...

Washington had assembled 12,000 militiamen on Long Island. By a series of sudden naval maneuvers British Generals Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, Percy and German General von Heister converged on the Americans, landing a detachment twice their size right behind them. The British took positions to march swiftly toward the East River, trap Washington’s entire army, and put a sudden end to the insurrection. For five stormy days, they did not attack. As the storm passed, the Americans knew this could very well be the end. By “coincidence,” the last reinforcements we had were from the shores of Massachusetts Bay. They located a flotilla of small boats to take the army across the mile wide East River in silence, the dark of night. But as dawn was rising only a fraction of the Continental Army had made it across to safety. The Americans prepared for the worst. Just as the sun rose, a thick soupy fog rolled in off the Atlantic and socked in the coast until past noon. Using every second of his extra time, Washington saw his last man disembark to safety just as the fog lifted. Among the soldiers it became known as the miracle of Long Island. It not only saved the army, it unified the colonies in a way they had never been before, because now they too felt that God Himself was with them in their struggle.

**“...with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence...”** This is our heritage as Americans. God HAS blessed America. How to we seek God’s blessing today?

### FIRST \* AMERICA NEEDS CHRISTIANS WHO WILL REPENT AND PRAY.

2nd Chronicles 7:14 ***“If MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”***

The first step for anyone needing help is to admit their helplessness. As Christians privileged to live in America - this is our God-given responsibility! We make confession for America’s sins and we intercede for America’s needs. Patriotism is not the denial of our national shortcomings, but the presentation of those shortcomings to the Almighty.

### SECOND \* AMERICA NEEDS CHRISTIANS WHO WILL RESPOND WITH GODLY LIVES.

1st Timothy 2:1-3 ***“I urge, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. THIS IS GOOD, AND PLEASES GOD our Savior...”***

The next step is that we make God proud. We cannot ask for God’s blessing until we are being a blessing to God. God tells Christians that being a blessing to God is living *“in all godliness and holiness.”* Proverbs 14:34 says ***“Righteousness exalts a nation...”***...that means us. Patriotism is not our doing what we want, but doing our part as God directs us.

### THIRD \* AMERICA NEEDS CHRISTIANS WHO WILL REMEMBER OUR GODLY HERITAGE.

Psalms 33:12-22 ***“BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD...May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our trust in you.”***

The last step is that we do not forget. As Israel was entering the Promised Land, God warned to not forget who had delivered them (Deuteronomy 6:12). Neither can we as Christians in America. We remember Jesus died that we might live and we remember those who have paid for our freedom. Patriotism is not forgetting those to whom we are indebted, but remembering and celebrating those we follow. “God bless America” is tied to “In God We Trust”...***“May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our trust in you.”*** May America trust God and know God’s blessing.