**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

 *God’s Country ~ God’s People*

*God’s Providence for Our Lives*

July 1st, In the Year of Our Lord 2018

After nineteen years as a pastor, I now know what it takes to get on the front page of the county paper. You can preach great sermons to a small group inside the walls of the Fellowship building, but it’s when you take the Gospel the street, to the public square, that the greater public takes notice.

We (Believers who are called) take the application of the Gospel to defend those who are being oppressed and overcome by an oppressive leadership, and whose community is being dominated by a local government who refuses to obey the law. Public office holders are to serve and protect the community; not use their offices for their personal agendas. The public deposits their trust in public officials. When their trust is knowingly and repeatedly violated, the trust-bond is broken, and they no longer remain a moral basis to govern. This is when those in government resort to forcing the public to comply with their edicts. This leads to the tool of rebellion as our founding fathers did.

Remember that God gave us government for good not bad or evil (Romans 13:4).

Rebellion comes in many forms. At our place in history in America, we resort to petitioning the government to address our grievances. If that does not work, we have options. One option is that we wait for an election and elect from among ourselves other representatives. However, if the notice and process of election is hidden from the public, our civil process has been removed. We are left to notify an even larger public and cry louder to other officials within our state. We appeal to a higher governmental authority than our local one. Paul did this as a Roman citizen (Acts 25:7-12). We are not being tried for our lives here, however, the principle that we as Believers can appeal to a higher temporal government authority is biblically based.

**Our biblical duty**

Do Believers see a man left in the ditch who has been robbed and walk past? No. The basis of the Good Samaritan is that when we know someone is being or has been taken advantage, we are to act. We have a responsibility to God for our injured neighbor. We are not to walk on by the injured person. Every person is our neighbor (Luke 10:29ff).

 **God’s Peace is the Goal**

 Always remember that the Gospel is to bring peace. Paul starts his letters with the words, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:2). You can read Paul’s additional twelve letters and see similar words. The power in Paul’s letters is from God who is the God of grace and peace. The only power we all have as Believers is from God; it is not of our own. We cannot do righteousness unless God is at work in us.

As we read the Bible, we see God desires grace and peace to pervade man, **but first** he has to address the sin nature for there to be peace. God is the loving Father who disciplines and judges His creation (Hebrews 12). When Peter preached at the Temple steps, after Pentecost, through him, God’s judgement was being cast. The result was people surrendered; their hearts became cut, and they repented (Acts 2:36-38).

When God as Jesus Christ made His Triumphal entry, He was the Prince of Peace who brought the Message of grace, hope, love, forgiveness and more to the world. However, before all these gifts from God can be applied to mankind, there must be the surrender of the heart and then the power to repent comes to the new heart.

Isaiah speaks to the work of the Messiah and to those that follow in His footsteps.

**Isaiah 61:1** (Luke 4:17-22) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;

 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD,

 And the day of vengeance of our God;

 To comfort all who mourn,

 3 To grant those who mourn *in* Zion,

Giving them a garland instead of ashes,

The oil of gladness instead of mourning,

The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.

So they will be called **oaks of righteousness,**

The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

 4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins. They will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

**American Freedom**

 **This week, we celebrate the Declaration of Independence**. Note: a declaration does not mean that you have the intended goal you seek. A declaration declares your intentions. There is much work yet to be accomplished. In our America, the work of independence is an ongoing endeavor. We have all heard that “freedom is not free.” Someone has to constantly pay the price of freedom. That means you and me and all citizens. With the declaring and later constituting our freedom, there came a commitment to the vigilance of freedom. A watchful eye has to be kept or freedom will slip away.

**242 years ago**, men signed their names to a document that promoted the foundation of a free people. America has two founding documents that are known the world-over: The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. At the signing of the Constitution, Ben Franklin is quoted often when answering a question as to what form of government was passed; he responded, “A Republic, if you can keep it.” This means that the American Republic had weaknesses. The new government depended upon the consent of the people which meant their participation. Granted, the Constitution did not specifically grant people the right to vote as that was deferred to the states. Therefore, in application, at the time, the right to vote was only extended to white male property owners. So, this was the citizen group that the American Republic, from its inception, depended for participation of vote. Of course, the whole Constitution and Bill of Rights extended to all federal citizens. The Civil War mandated that all rights guaranteed in the Constitution be applied to the states. This was ratified in the 14th Amendment (July 9, 1868). Franklin’s point is true then and now. Without citizen participation, those who govern will evolve into King George. Without the people’s participation, the list of grievances grows long. The general population gets cut from the governing process by two methods: The governing authorities remove their rights of participation or the population becomes too busy with life and neglects their civic duty.

 **Government in the Bible**

 Way before the time God incarnated Himself to be one of us, the Hebrew people clamored for a king to rule over them. They wanted to be like their neighbors. In 1 Samuel 8, Samuel is growing old and Samuel’s sons did not oversee the people correctly. The people came to Samuel and demanded God select a king to rule over them. God warned the people that a king would extract many things from them including their money and children to serve him. Therefore, Saul was selected to be the first king over the Hebrew people. There was Saul, then David, then Solomon. Each ruled for about 40 years from approximately 1050 B.C - 930 B.C. Those of us who know the Bible know that all three of these kings had huge problems. Saul was selfish and prideful. God ended his life in battle along with the lives of his sons. As a young man, David is described as ‘a man after God’s own heart’, but, as the years passed, David became known as a man of much bloodshed and was not allowed to build the Temple. David’s son, Solomon, did great things and was close to the Lord at times but married foreign wives and built pagan temples for their gods. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom became divided as God told Solomon it would be because of his sin (1 Kings 11).

 Therefore, just as the Lord told the people who demanded a king, the country, the Promised Land, was eventually divided due to corrupt kings, corrupt government. It is true that at least two of the kings (David and Solomon) were called by God to write biblical books. David is credited for writing most of the Psalms, and Solomon is credited for writing Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes and collecting many proverbs for the Book of Proverbs. Proof that God can work through fallen man. Thus, all rulers have some shortcomings as can be expected.

**America’s Clamors for A New Government**

 Over 200 years ago, Americans clamored for a new government and appealed to King George of England. They were denied and thus rebelled and fought their way to form a new country. The colonialists had a list of grievances against King George. They were different from the grievances that the Hebrew people made to Samuel but similar in that the Hebrews complained about Samuel’s sons who were not ruling correctly. However, through both historical events, a new government was formed. God also called the Hebrew people to participate with Him in governing. He had called them to keep His commandments from a circumcised heart. We know they did not always participate in God’s oversight, and they rebelled which led to their destruction and deportation. They could not keep their country God gave them, because their life practices were not conducive to maintaining a free people. They wanted to be free and protected by an earthly king that failed them.

To be free within the parameters of God’s freedom, a people must choose not to engross themselves in their own selfish desires. The Hebrew people became engrossed in themselves. This is not just a Hebrew story, it is throughout mankind. Without God, man worships himself. This is why God has the best plan for country, for community, for family. This starts with loving God and then we can love our neighbor in the way God desires.

The American people wanted a just government, and, with the election of George Washington, they got as close to one at that point in time that history would allow. Meaning that the Founding Fathers created a government that was in the right direction of God’s intent but as we know much work still needed to be done. They laid the groundwork, the foundation upon which all people could be free. We have twenty-seven amendments to the Constitution that build upon the Founder’s work. Concerning America’s first President, George Washington, we have insight into his views on religion and his personal faith by reading his closing address to the nation.

**Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports**. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation **desert the oaths** **which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?** 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.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? September 19, 1796

 **Today, being Sunday,** The Lord’s Day, July 1, in the Year of Our Lord 2018, we stand 242 years from the writing and signing of America’s Declaration of Independence. But Independence from what? The people had grievances against King George. They wanted to be free from his oppressive rule and govern themselves.

 **The U.S. Declaration of Independence** listed numerous grievances against the King of England ranging from quartering soldiers in people’s houses to taxation without consent. In all, there were 27 grievances. *Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the Present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let the Facts be submitted to a candid World.*

**Conclusion of the Declaration from the Grievances**

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of the divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.*

**Here are some historical facts in the public domain.**

 The **United States Declaration of Independence** is the statement adopted by the [Second Continental Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Continental_Congress) meeting at the [Pennsylvania State House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_State_Capitol#History) (now known as [Independence Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Hall)) in [Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia%2C_Pennsylvania) on July 4, 1776. The Declaration announced that the [thirteen American colonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) then at war with the [Kingdom of Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain) would regard themselves as thirteen independent [sovereign states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_state) no longer under British rule. With the Declaration, these new states took a collective first step toward forming the [United States of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States).

The declaration was signed by representatives from [New Hampshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_New_Hampshire), [Massachusetts Bay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Massachusetts_Bay), [Rhode Island and Providence Plantations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony_of_Rhode_Island_and_Providence_Plantations), [Connecticut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut_Colony), [New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_New_York), [New Jersey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_New_Jersey), [Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Pennsylvania), [Maryland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Maryland), [Delaware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delaware_Colony), [Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony_of_Virginia), [North Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_North_Carolina), [South Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_South_Carolina), and [Georgia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Georgia).

The Declaration was passed on July 2 with no opposing votes. A [committee of five](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_of_five) had drafted it to be ready when Congress voted on independence. [John Adams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams), a leader in pushing for independence, had persuaded the committee to select [Thomas Jefferson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) to compose the original draft of the document, which Congress edited to produce the final version. The Declaration was a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to [declare independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Resolution) from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the [American Revolutionary War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War). Adams wrote to his wife [Abigail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abigail_Adams), "The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America" – although [Independence Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_%28United_States%29) is actually celebrated on July 4, the date that the wording of the Declaration of Independence was approved.

After ratifying the text on July 4, Congress issued the Declaration of Independence in several forms. It was initially published as the printed [Dunlap broadside](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_history_of_the_United_States_Declaration_of_Independence#Dunlap_broadside) that was widely distributed and read to the public. The source copy used for this printing has been lost and may have been a copy in Thomas Jefferson's hand. Jefferson's original draft is preserved at the [Library of Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress), complete with changes made by John Adams and [Benjamin Franklin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin), as well as Jefferson's notes of changes made by Congress. The best-known version of the Declaration is a signed copy that is displayed at the [National Archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Archives_and_Records_Administration) in [Washington, D.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington%2C_D.C.), and which is popularly regarded as the official document. This engrossed copy was ordered by Congress on July 19 and signed primarily on August 2.

The sources and interpretation of the Declaration have been the subject of much scholarly inquiry. The Declaration justified the independence of the United States by listing colonial grievances against [King George III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_III_of_the_United_Kingdom) and by asserting certain [natural and legal rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights), including a [right of revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_of_revolution). Having served its original purpose in announcing independence, references to the text of the Declaration were few in the following years. [Abraham Lincoln](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln) made it the centerpiece of his policies and his rhetoric, as in the [Gettysburg Address](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gettysburg_Address) of 1863. Since then, it has become a well-known statement on [human rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights), particularly its second sentence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that [all men are created equal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_men_are_created_equal), that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are -

 [Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life%2C_Liberty_and_the_pursuit_of_Happiness). -

This has been called "one of the best-known sentences in the English language", containing "the most potent and consequential words in American history". The passage came to represent a moral standard to which the United States should strive. This view was notably promoted by Lincoln, who considered the Declaration to be the foundation of his political philosophy and argued that it is a statement of principles through which the [United States Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution) should be interpreted.

**The U.S. Declaration of Independence** inspired many similar documents in other countries, the first being the 1789 *Declaration of Flanders* issued during the [Brabant Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brabant_Revolution) in the [Austrian Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_Netherlands) (modern-day [Belgium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium)). It also served as the primary model for numerous declarations of independence in [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and [Latin America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America), as well as [Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) ([Liberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberia)) and [Oceania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceania) ([New Zealand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand)) during the first half of the 19th century.

**Text of the first part of the U.S. Declaration**

**In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.**

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the [Laws of Nature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_law) and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

"We hold these truths to be [self-evident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-evident), that [all men are created equal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_men_are_created_equal), that they are endowed by their [Creator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creator_deity) with certain [unalienable Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inalienable_rights), that among these are [Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life%2C_liberty_and_the_pursuit_of_happiness).

**"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the**[**consent of the governed**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consent_of_the_governed)**, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the**[**Right of the People to alter or to abolish it**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_revolution)**, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence,** indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute [Despotism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Despotism), it is their right, it is their duty, to [throw off such Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolution#Political_and_socioeconomic_revolutions), and to provide new Guards for their future security."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence>

**Did the Christians have any impact in 1776?**

**Founding Fathers Considered Clergy**

The colleges from which the Founding Fathers graduated were seminaries; some of them are Princeton, Harvard, and Yale. Most of the Founding Fathers were not pastors but were church officers, elders, managers, or founders of Bible societies which shows that the clergy label upon them is correct.

 It is correct then, that almost half the signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as most every Founding Father, graduated from orthodox Christian-teaching seminaries. That Harvard and William and Mary taught infidelity [one disbelief in the Scriptures and in Christianity] is irrelevant; the relevant point is did the Founding Fathers subscribe to infidelity? The answer is a definite NO! (emphasis added) Infidels Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall (became orthodox at the end of his life) and John Adams are the only popular Founding Fathers who attended hotbeds of infidelity that were not orthodox; William and Mary and Harvard respectively.
Many of our Founding Fathers that graduated from seminaries were considered church elders/church officers. Here is a small list:

SAMUEL ADAMS, SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION, FATHER OF THE REVOLUTION, ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

JOHN HANCOCK, FIRST SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION, ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, STARTED THE "MINUTEMEN," commissioned George Washington commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS, ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, Vice-President of the American Bible Society; of the Massachusetts Bible Society. ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

ROBERT TREAT PAINE (SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION): Military Chaplain. HELPED WRITE THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION. ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

RUFUS KING (SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION): Selected as manager of the American Bible Society, Signer of the Constitution, Ratifier of the Bill of Rights, ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.
BUSHROD WASHINGTON was a (U. S. SUPREME COURT JUSTICE), Vice-President of the American Bible Society, and Vice-President of the American Sunday School Union. ATTENDED WILLIAM AND MARY, WAS ORTHODOX.

JOHN LOWELL (REVOLUTIONARY OFFICER; MEMBER OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS): Member of the Society for the Propagating of the Gospel among the Indians and Others. ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX. Authored Article I in Massachusetts Constitution of 1779, and his insistence upon its adoption into the Bill of Rights, "All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential and inalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties..."

JONATHAN TRUMBULL, GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT, ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX, ORDAINED PASTOR.

TIMOTHY PICKERING, REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL; SECRETARY OF STATE, His ideas formed the Northwest Ordinance, ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON, SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION, ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX.

ZEPHANIAH SWIFT, AUTHOR OF AMERICA'S FIRST LEGAL TEXT, ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX.

JAMES BOWDOIN (GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS): Member of the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others. ATTENDED HARVARD, WAS ORTHODOX.

JAMES KENT (FATHER OF AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE) ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX.

JOEL BARLOW (DIPLOMAT UNDER WASHINGTON AND ADAMS): Chaplain in the American Revolution for three years. ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX, NOT BECOMING A LIBERAL UNTIL 1794.

JOHN COTTON SMITH (GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT; U. S. CONGRESSMAN): President of the Litchfield County Foreign Missionary Society; first President of the Connecticut Bible Society; President of the American Bible Society; President of the American Board of Foreign Missions. ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX, A PURITAN MINISTER.

JOHN TREADWELL (GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT; MEMBER OF CONTINENTAL CONGRESS): Member of the Missionary Society of Connecticut. ATTENDED YALE, WAS ORTHODOX.

<https://ourfoundingtruth.blogspot.com/2007/10/founding-fathers-considered-clergy.html>

**Is God Mentioned In The U.S. Constitution?**

**The Constitution was** written during the Philadelphia Convention—now known as the Constitutional Convention—which convened from May 25 to September 17, 1787. It was signed on September 17, 1787.

Article VII

Attest William Jackson Secretary

done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the **Year of our Lord** one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

 [G°. Washington](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/founding-fathers-virginia#washington)
*Presidt and deputy from Virginia*

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**God creates all things including government.**

**God has an intent for government.**

**Bible Verse for Good Government**

**Romans 13:3-4**

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.

In a Republic, the people rule through elected leaders who are to carry-out certain duties. These duties above all are to protect people. In our Republic system, we have Civil Rights, and therefore, government is to protect the downtrodden, the weak and the minority from being overrun by the majority and those that are more powerful.

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 **Bible Verses about Protecting the Helpless** (ESV)

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[**Psalm 82:3-4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+82%3A3-4&version=ESV) Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

[**Proverbs 31:8-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+31%3A8-9&version=ESV)Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

[**Isaiah 1:17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+1%3A17&version=ESV) Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

[**Jeremiah 22:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+22%3A3&version=ESV)Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.

[**Psalm 118:8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A8&version=ESV) It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. Bottom of Form

[**Jeremiah 21:12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+21%3A12&version=ESV)O house of David! Thus says the Lord: “‘Execute justice in the morning, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed, lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of your evil deeds.’” Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

[**Proverbs 18:10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+18%3A10&version=ESV)The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

[**Psalm 34:19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34%3A19&version=ESV)Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

[**Matthew 23:23-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23%3A23-24&version=ESV)“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

[**Acts 20:35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3A35&version=ESV)In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

[**John 16:33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A33&version=ESV)I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

 How do we as Americans protect the poor, the needy, the downtrodden? We vote and elect our political leaders from among us. There isn’t any ruling class from a royal family. We give consent by our vote to elect rulers to rule for our benefit not theirs. This is the core value in a Republic.

**Article 4 Section. 4. U.S. Constitution**

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a **Republican** Form of Government and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened), against domestic Violence.

**Republic by definition**([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): [*res publica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Res_publica)) is a [form of government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Form_of_government) in which the country is considered a "public matter", not the [private concern or property](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Res_privata) of the rulers. The primary positions of power within a republic are not inherited. It is a form of government under which the [head of state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_state) is not a [monarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch).

In American English, the definition of a republic refers specifically to a form of government in which elected individuals represent the citizen body and exercise power according to the [rule of law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_law) under a [constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution), including [separation of powers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_powers) with an elected [head of state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_state), referred to as a [Constitutional republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_republic) or [representative democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representative_democracy). [**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic)

 In America, we have a Republic in which all citizens are eligible to participate unless they have disqualified themselves. (Example: being convicted of a felony.) In America, we have the distinction that citizens conduct their affairs for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of a ruler.

THE VOTE AND THE ELECTION IS AT THE CORE OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC. THIS IS WHAT PROTECTS THE PEOPLE FROM A KING GEORGE FROM RULING FOREVER.

**Almost a third of the amendments added to the Constitution after the Bill of Rights was ratified concern the ability to vote.** The Fifteenth Amendment granted the right to vote to former slaves and people of color. The Nineteenth Amendment gave the vote to women, while the Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth and Twenty-sixth amendments gave representation to the District of Columbia, forbid poll taxes and lowered the voting age to 18, respectively. The passage of each of these Amendments reflected a shift towards making voting a right of all citizens and indeed a fundamental part of citizenship.

**But do we have a fundamental affirmative individual right to vote in our Constitution? The answer may surprise you - "No."**

**The 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments *outlaw discrimination in voting* *on the basis of race, sex and age respectively*, but they do not guarantee eligible American citizens an affirmative individual or citizenship right to vote.**

**On December 12, 2000, in**[***Bush v. Gore***](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-949.ZPC.html)**the U.S. Supreme Court said that “the individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote." As a result, states’ rights reigned over individual rights because there is no citizenship right to vote in the Constitution. Top of Form**

**https://www.acslaw.org/acsblog/does-the-us-constitution-guarantee-americans-an-affirmative-individual-right-to-vote**

**Thus, our right to be a Republic and vote individually and hold elections is granted to us by our state constitution.**

**THE TEXAS CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE 1. BILL OF RIGHTS**

**That the general, great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established, we declare:**

**Sec. 1. FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY OF STATE.** Texas is a free and independent State, subject only to the Constitution of the United States, and the maintenance of our free institutions and the perpetuity of the Union depend upon the preservation of the right of local self-government, unimpaired to all the States.

 **Sec. 2. INHERENT POLITICAL POWER; REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT**. All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit. The faith of the people of Texas stands pledged to the preservation of a republican form of government, and, subject to this limitation only, they have at all times the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think expedient.

**Sec. 27. RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY; PETITION FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.** The citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good; and apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

**THE TEXAS CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE 6. SUFFRAGE**

**Article 2 guarantees the right to vote**

**OATHS BY ELECTED OFFICE HOLDERS.**

**ARE OATHS CONSTITUTIONAL?**

**First Act passed by congress “Oaths”**

With all the demands of creating the first federal government, the Founding Fathers held the OATH of OFFICE to be the most important and passed it into law ahead of the other demands. It is obvious that they considered a man’s word valuable in a public oath. What a person promises to uphold in a public service needs to be declared so the population knows their intentions. What is a person bound to uphold? What is a person promising the public they will do while in office?

**“An Act to Regulate the Time and Manner of Administering Certain Oaths” was signed into law on June 1, 1789. It prescribed the text of and procedure for the administration of the oath of office.**

**The act mandated that the oath be administered in the following form: “**I, A.B. do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States.” **This simple, straightforward oath fulfilled the constitutional requirement outlined in**[**Article VI, clause 3**](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html#6.0)**:**

**The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.**

 Another vital element of public life for the new government was the placement of a chaplain. This indicated their determination and will that God be with them in their governance.

**Chaplain**

**When the Senate first convened in New York City on April 6, 1789, one of its first orders of business was to appoint a committee to recommend a candidate for chaplain. On April 25, the Senate elected the Right Reverend Samuel Provoost, Episcopal Bishop of New York, as its first chaplain.**

 **Moving forward to today**

**What causes me to go to the public square? As a Servant called by God…as a citizen in a country given to us by God...**

When I see:

1. Insufficient and/or malfeasant disregard to keep public records of free election as proscribed by our Republic.
2. The oaths of public responsibility neglected. It is to my knowledge that our town did not administer the oath of office. So to what is their allegiance?
3. When I see laws passed without a quorum.
4. When I see a woman plead to town council that she is afraid of them.
5. When I see money illegally assessed upon the public.
6. When I see that the elderly could be forced to sell their homes due to local government regulations.
7. When I see the Mayor call an honorable man’s truthful words “Fake News.”
8. When I see the town-government forced to admit that the laws they passed over the past 17 years were illegally passed and therefore null and void.
9. When I have knowledge of a public employee deciding to quit their job rather that go along with illegal orders.

 All of this and more called me to the public square. Above all, I am accountable to God for my calling, for my testimony, for my actions. God sees what has happened and what is happening. We all know the saying, “When good men do nothing evil prevails.” Who is the front line against evil in our communities? It is the Pastors.

 How did Jesus respond to the leaders who knew the law, the truth, and who were responsible for the welfare of the people but they chose to follow their own selfish heart? These leaders – Jesus went to their headquarters – to their chambers – and publicly held them accountable. For this, He was prosecuted. Jesus’ Sermon on The Mount tells us that we will be persecuted for acting in His name and for doing righteousness.

 I could have chosen a different life in a national religious denomination. I could sit back and collect a paycheck, preach feel-good Sunday sermons that were delivered to me via email from a denominational headquarters and never leave the building.

 I call the above description a surrender. Pastors that are called by God do not surrender. They Shepherd. They proclaim God’s infallible Word. They are called by God to protect people, community and nation. They protect; they do not shrink back from evil. The walls of the church are not our boundaries. We are not confined to what the fallen world defines for us. We are called as Shepherds for all of God’s people.

The Word of God is meant to penetrate through the walls of the church building and go into the world with action and deed of the Gospel, to serve and protect. Yes, Jesus proclaimed that His kingdom was not of this world. However, while we are here we are to take care of those who are downtrodden, who are weaker than the overlords. We are to protect the children (Matthew 18:16; Mark 9:42; Luke 7:2). If you do not think by removing the vote and election, that this does not place children at risk then you are blind. Here are passages where God tells us to take care of people in this life. [**Psalm 82:3-4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+82%3A3-4&version=ESV); [**Proverbs 31:8-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+31%3A8-9&version=ESV)**;** [**Isaiah 1:17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+1%3A17&version=ESV); [**Jeremiah 22:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+22%3A3&version=ESV); [**Psalm 118:8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+118%3A8&version=ESV); [**Jeremiah 21:12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+21%3A12&version=ESV); [**Proverbs 18:10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+18%3A10&version=ESV); [**Psalm 34:19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+34%3A19&version=ESV); [**Matthew 23:23-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23%3A23-24&version=ESV); [**Acts 20:35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20%3A35&version=ESV); [**John 16:33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A33&version=ESV)

When our right to vote and hold elections, in a country founded upon God’s principles, are taken away by force or slight of hand, we have lost our freedom. What do I think when I see the officials responsible for this crime? I think of all the wars in which brave men and women died protecting our right to vote and elect. I think of Arlington National Cemetery; I think of Normandy and the nearby cemetery; I think of Gettysburg; I think of the religious war that we are currently fighting all over the world.

I think of all the soldiers who died, and I think of their mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers and sons and daughters – that their life sacrifices to protect our right to vote and hold elections has been trampled. Their testimony by the giving of their lives has been forgotten by those that violated our public trust and removed our right to vote and hold elections.

**2 Timothy 4:1-5 1** I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

***Proverbs 31:8-9***

*8 Open your mouth for the mute, For the rights of all the unfortunate. 9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,*

 *And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.*

AMEN