

[Readings: Is. 57:15-19; Ps. 85; Phil. 4:6-9; John 14:23-29]

Most of us probably remember learning at least part of the Declaration of Independence in school. The one in which Thomas Jefferson wrote: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that 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.”

What we might NOT remember learning in school, however, are the principles upon which our Founding Fathers and Mothers built this nation, the foundation of faith our country was founded on. One of our first great leaders, John Adams, once stated:

“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”

The following prayer was found in President George Washington’s prayer journal. It beautifully illustrates Who our ancestors were looking to for guidance as they were building a new nation on a foundation of faith, “under God.”

“Oh, eternal and everlasting God, direct my thoughts, words and work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit. Daily, frame me more and more in the likeness of Thy son, Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in thy appointed time obtain the resurrection of the justified unto eternal life. Bless, O Lord, the whole race of mankind and let the world be filled with the knowledge of Thee and Thy son, Jesus Christ.”

Let us give thanks for our country’s Founding Fathers and Mothers for building this country on a foundation of faith. Let us thank God for this committee of men and women and thank Him for working through His people to lay a solid foundation of faith, structure, unity, and love for US citizens.

But also, let us not forget that our ultimate example of selflessness is given to us by Christ. [Galatians 5:1](#) says, “For freedom, Christ set us free.”

Christ died to give us freedom, and because of this, we can celebrate by praising God for His love, shown when He hung on the cross, gave up His freedom and died so that we might live. [John 3:16](#) reminds us that “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

It seems that every time we turn on the news we hear about war and crisis in countries around the world. But we don't have to live in fear. When our faith is centered in Christ, we can have a sense of peace that only comes from knowing that our times are in His hands. When our security comes from a faith in God's perfect plan for our lives, we can experience peace as we think about the future. God is forever faithful so that we can find our strength in Him. As Jesus said in [John 16:33](#), “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

We live in an ever-changing world -- one that, at times, just makes no sense. From natural disasters to terrorist attacks, hate crimes and unmentionable acts of violence, we get the in-depth report from every news outlet in the United States. And, we watch these special reports, trying to find some kind of reason for the craziness, some perfect explanation for why these things happen and who is responsible and how can we make a difference. And, while we will never get all the answers on this side of eternity, we know that as Christians, we are called to trust God, share His love and pray. [Philippians 4:6](#) says “Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” With this in mind, let us pray...

Dear God,

As we face these uncertain times in our nation, we ask you, Lord, to dwell among us. We are comforted by the knowledge that You alone are our Savior and Lord, and the ultimate Master of life. We trust our nation to Your loving care, Lord. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation's leaders.

Give them the wisdom to know what is right, and the courage to do it. Give us Your light and Your truth to guide us in our ways so that we may seek Your will in our lives and impact the world around us for Your Kingdom. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Let us also remember that there are men and women far from their families and the comforts of home today -- missing hugs and kisses, birthday parties and baseball games, praying for a safe return to the country and the people they love.

These are United States military; some are our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, grandchildren, parents, neighbors, classmates, friends. Others we have never met, but they risk their lives daily for our freedom, and there are so many who have risked their lives for our freedom in many years past. For them, too, we now pray:

Dear Lord,

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the men and women who serve our country now and in the past, and for the sacrifices their families make so that we can all enjoy the blessing of freedom.

We praise You for calling them to help protect us, and for giving them the courage and ability to do their jobs well.

Guide their choices and their actions, Lord. Help them to see You working in their daily lives, whether in the field, at home, or abroad.

Surround them with Your mighty angels; protect them in Your mercy; cover them with your grace.

Guard their hearts while they are far from loved ones, and bless them with moments to cherish when they are together.

Hold these families close, Lord. May they look to You for the strength and peace that only You can give.

In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.