

**Sermon Notes**  
**Good News Church**  
*Psalms, Proverbs & Parables*  
**Proverbs & Providence – God’s Gracious Hand**  
**Guidance and Grace for America**  
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**7-5-26**

**Proverbs & Providence – God’s Gracious Hand (Part 2)**

**Last Week:** The book of Proverbs ultimately is about **Wisdom, Worship, Words, Work, Humility, and Honesty**. As we celebrate America’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, and look back on our history, there’s no doubt that our country was founded on these six Biblical principles. **It’s also apparent that God’s Providential & Gracious Hand has been guiding America from the moment the first Pilgrims arrived in 1620 to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and throughout the history of this country, including today.**

**What is Providence?**

**Providence (def):** divine guidance or care; the power sustaining and guiding human destiny

**When we think of Providence, it is not only that God looks at human affairs. The point is that he looks after human affairs. He not only watches us, He watches over us.**

**Westminster Shorter Catechism**

**Q11: What are God’s works of Providence? (What does God do?)**

A: God’s works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

**God’s Providence as seen in Proverbs**

“A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” (16:9)

We may roll the dice but the Lord determines how they fall. (16:33)

Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails. (19:21)

There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord. (21:30-31)

**The Faith of our Founding Fathers**

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”  
– Proverbs 9:10

“Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.” – Proverbs 28:14

## The Reason to Form America

*“Every single charter written at the start of the United States puts the propagation of the gospel as one of the top priorities. In addition to getting out from under the oppressive rule of a tyrannical king and abuse of power, one of the other priorities was to end slavery. Breaking away from the British government was the only way they had a chance to end slavery.” – David Barton (Wall Builders, “The American Heritage Series”)*

There were 250 founding fathers, 95% of whom were outspoken about their faith.

- In the **“Maxims of George Washington”** (Founding Father, 1<sup>st</sup> President of the U.S.) Washington recorded everything he thought to be important about politics, society, religion, education, family, morality, etc., and used 54 Biblical terms (including Jesus Christ), to do so.
- The Declaration of Independence launched the Revolutionary War, and George Washington was asked to lead America’s army against the most powerful military in the world. **Washington wrote, “Our only hope involves the necessary intervention of a higher power.” If America prevailed, he said, “I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies.”**
- During the revolutionary war, we were losing numerous key battles. **John Adams** (Founding Father, 2<sup>nd</sup> President of the U.S.) was asked, *“Can we overcome the British?”* Adams replied, **“Yes, we can overcome the British if we fear God and repent of our sins.”**
  - **“The general principles upon which the father’s achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity.” - John Adams**
- When asked about his faith, **Samuel Adams** (Founding Father, Boston Tea Party mastermind) said, **“I rely on the merits of Jesus Christ to pardon me of all my sins.”**
- On the eve of the signing of the Declaration of Independence (Aug. 1, 1776), **Samuel Adams** gave a speech to Congress in which he said, **“We have this day restored the Sovereign. We have declared independence from the earthly king (King George III) and we have declared dependence on God.” - Eric Metaxas**
- **James McHenry** (Founding Father, signer of the Constitution) said, **“The best prevention of crime is reading the Bible.”**
- **Patrick Henry** (Founding Father, “Give me liberty or give me death!”), one of the originators of “The Last Will and Testament” (intended to provide information about inheritance, as well as, testimony of faith) said, **“This is all I can leave my children, but the inheritance of Jesus Christ is what will make them rich.”**
- We’ve been told and taught that many (or most) of our Founding Fathers were not Christians but were ‘Deists’ who believed in the existence of a ‘Supreme Being.’ The spotlight of evidence is usually directed towards **Benjamin Franklin** and **Thomas Jefferson** because they

were known as the least religious signers of the declaration of independence. However, **Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson both recommended the Christian gospel be taught as a part of the education of our children.**

- **WORSHIP IN THE U.S. CAPITAL:** In 1800 when we moved into the first US Capitol, one of the first acts of Congress was to approve the use of the capital as a church. This was initiated by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson ordered the Marine Corps band to lead worship in the capital as a part of the Sunday worship service.

**Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence,** virtually all of them had Protestant Christian backgrounds. 29 of the signers had clergy backgrounds or received some sort of theological training.

**Most all of the men who started the American Bible Society were Founding Fathers,** including John Jay (1<sup>st</sup> Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), John Marshall (4<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), John Langdon (signer of DOI), Charles Pinckney (signer of DOI), and Francis Scott Key (writer of the U.S. National Anthem)

*“The single most quoted source for the Declaration of Independence is the Bible.” – David Barton*

### **God’s Providence in American History**

#### **1755 Battle of Fort Duquesne (Monongahela)**

When George Washington was first a 22-year-old Lieutenant Colonel, the French and Indian War was under way, and the British Crown had sent to America two regular regiments under the command of General Edward Braddock. Braddock’s mission was to march from Virginia through the wilderness to the falls of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh) and capture the French Fort Duquesne from which Indian raids on the Virginia and Maryland frontiers were being staged.

Washington was a volunteer aide to Braddock, and expressed that, in his opinion, it would be madness to fight the Indians’ wilderness warfare tactics with their traditional, open field, formation marches, but Braddock didn’t listen to Washington.

Sure enough, as the British soldiers neared Fort Duquesne, they came under heavy attack from an unseen enemy surrounding and cutting them down left and right.

The British knew of no other way to fight except in formation. General Braddock refused Washington’s request to lead the troops into the woods “and engage the enemy in their own way.” Braddock and the British officers tried desperately to keep their men lined up under the rain of fire, but the slaughter was terrific. One after another they went down. Of the 86 total officers, nearly 75% of them were killed.

70 of the 86 officers were on horseback. Of the 70 officers on horseback, 69 were killed or wounded. Only one was not. That surviving officer had two horses shot out from under him, a bullet took his hat right off of his head, and bullet holes torn all throughout his clothing. That man was... George Washington.

15 years after the Battle of Monongahela, Washington and his companions encountered a Native American Indian Chief, Red Hawk, who was at the Battle of Monongahela. Through an interpreter, revealed that he and his best marksmen had specifically targeted Washington, with the chief personally firing 11 to 17 shots at him. Believing that *"a power mightier far than we shielded you"*, and that the *"Great Spirit"* was watching over him, the Native warriors ultimately ceased firing at the young officer. The chief then prophesied that Washington would go on to *"become the chief of nations"* and lead a powerful empire.

Washington later wrote, *"The miraculous care of Providence ... protected me beyond all human expectations."*

Samuel Davies (a Presbyterian minister and future president of Princeton University) preached a sermon in which he said about Washington, *"I cannot, but hope that Providence has preserved this for some single purpose to this country."*

### **1776 Battle of Brooklyn**

George Washington and the Continental Army was trapped in Brooklyn, New York, by the British Army. They were outnumbered (20,000 to 10,000), outgunned, and overwhelmed by the British force. If the British attack of the next morning, the revolution would have been over. But that night, Washington ordered his man to begin evacuating across the east river boat after boat carried soldiers through the darkness, but there was a huge problem. By sunrise, thousands of soldiers were still stranded on shore and once sunrise came, the British would see everything and it would all be over. But then suddenly a massive fog rolled in, and this was no ordinary fog. It was unusually thick and completely hid the area and covered Washington's army from the British. Witnesses say the fog became so dense that it concealed the final movement of the American troops until every last soldier escaped.

Everyone at the time saw this as a miracle/an act of God. Washington was on the last boat, and the moment he set foot on Manhattan Island, the fog miraculously cleared. The British talked about this. They saw it as a "wonder," as if Aladdin's magical lamp had made the Americans disappear. It wasn't magic. It was providence.

### **1780 Discovery of Benedict Arnold's Treasonous Actions**

Another conspicuous providential event that occurred was the discovery of Benedict's Arnold's treason. In September 1780, *"a combination of extraordinary circumstances"* occurred that led to the capture of British Major John André and the discovery of Benedict Arnold's plan to yield West Point to the British. Had his treasonous plans not been found out, West Point would have fallen into British hands, which would have been a blow too great for the Continentals to sustain.

General Arnold plots his treasonous act with Major Andre. Washington said, *"The providential train of circumstances which led to the discovery of the plot affords the most convincing proof that the liberties of America are the object of divine Protection."*

### **1787 Signing of the U.S. Constitution**

George Washington and others saw the development of the U.S. Constitution as being one of the most incredible, miraculous provisions of God's Providence.

*“The adoption of the Constitution will demonstrate as visibly the finger of Providence as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate it.” – George Washington*

Every year, when the United Nations gets together, there are new nations that have formed and former nations that have dissolved. America has stood strong under the same Constitution longer than any nation in the history of the world.

### **Constitutions**

- America 1 (1776)
- France 15 (1786)
- Brazil 7(1822)
- Poland 6 (1921)
- Afghan 5 (1923)
- Russia 4 (1918)

*“The only source of national security is in our recognition of our humble dependence upon Almighty God.” - John Adams*

### **1860 Uneducated Prairie President**

The fact that Abraham Lincoln became president was unbelievable. He had a total of 12 months of formal education, yet he had a sharp theological mind, great intellect, and incredible Wisdom. He was a prairie lawyer who did not go to college or law school. He was self-educated absorbing foundational texts such as the King James Bible, *Aesop's Fables*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the works of William Shakespeare. Lincoln had a track record of losing elections (8 total) until the election of 1860. Even then, Lincoln won just 39% of the popular vote but he secured more than enough electoral votes and won the presidency. Many would say that Lincoln was our greatest president, and we know now how unlikely he was to have become president, outside of the providential hand of a sovereign and gracious God.

### **1944 D-Day Invasion (Normandy, France)**

The recent movie, “Pressure” tells the story of the difficulty that General Dwight D. Eisenhower faced in trying to determine when to make the Normandy invasion, because of the possibility of very bad weather. Eisenhower had to make the tough call to wait. The day started off with the sun shining, but then the clouds rolled in and sure enough, there was a massive storm, but in the middle of the storm, there was a break, and it was in that break, the largest amphibious invasion in the history of the world took place. In the sunshine, Eisenhower decided to STOP, and in the storm, Eisenhower decided to GO. That was God’s providential care, not just over America but over the world!

### **2024 Donald Trump’s Head Turn (Butler, PA)**

In Butler, PA, while giving a campaign speech, just as a bullet was fired by a would-be assassin from less than 150 yards away, President Trump turned his head just slightly to point towards a chart. As he did, a bullet grazed the top of his ear. Had he not turned his head in that split second, he certainly would have been killed.

### **TRAGEDIES**

- Civil War
- Trail of Tears
- Lincoln assassination
- The Great Depression
- Pearl Harbor attack
- JFK assassination

- MLK assassination
- 9/11 attack
- Columbine H.S. attack (Columbine, CO)
- Sandy Hook Elementary attack (Newtown, CT)
- Stoneman Douglas H.S. attack (Parkland, FL)
- Covid-19 pandemic
- Robb Elementary attack (Uvalde, TX)
- Charlie Kirk assassination
- Donald Trump's near assassination

### How do you explain America?

*"It's not random events. It's an intelligent design - Franklin, Adams, Washington, Hamilton, Madison, etc. They all saw themselves as instruments of design, not as authors."* – Michael Medved (author of "The American Miracle")

### God's Providence in YOUR History

If God's providential guidance and care for America is like a beautifully embroidered quilt that He is weaving, then **each thread of that quilt represents each individual person who is a part of America, in one fashion or another, and that includes you.**

**God's providential care for America primarily exists in His providential care for you and for me, for those who submit themselves under the shadow of His wing (Psalm 91).**

Think about your life (the big and small, good and bad, trials, tragedies, victories, open doors, relationships built, places you've lived, people you've met, jobs where you've been hired (or fired), accidents, illnesses, etc., etc., etc.

- If this didn't happen... then this wouldn't have happened.
- If I didn't meet this person... then my life would have not gone this direction.

### "For Want of a Nail"

Popularized by Benjamin Franklin (and R.C. Sproul)

*For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;  
 For want of a shoe, the horse was lost;  
 For want of a horse, the rider was lost;  
 For want of a rider, the battle was lost;  
 For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost,  
 And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.*

**If we believe in the Providence of God, then we must believe in the sovereignty of God, not only over the kingdom and the battle, but also the nail.** God is in control, not only of the obvious big things, but also of the seemingly insignificant minuscule things, because big things are always dependent on small things.

- **PROVIDENCE & THE CROSS - But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him and fill**

him with grief (*Isaiah 53:10*). In fact, everything they did occurred according to your eternal will and plan (*Acts 4:28*).

**God's gracious hand is always there guiding, providing, and caring for His people and any nation that says, "Our God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12)**

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

I mentioned last week that, over the past 75 years or so, our great nation has been slowly drifting away from those values and principles that were so deeply embedded by our founding fathers of Wisdom, Worship, Words, Work, Humility, and Honesty, as we saw last week in our overview of Proverbs.

My prayer is that, at this 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of America, we as individuals (and collectively as a nation) would be encouraged (or awakened) that our faith, individually and collectively, absolutely makes a difference in the health of our country. The part affects the whole.

As I mentioned last week... For many people, faith is abstract, irrelevant, and unnecessary. In fact, that's our natural bent! But if you want to see evidence of the reality, truth, and power of faith, specifically in the person of Jesus Christ, look no further than the United States of America, a country that was founded on the faith and principles of Christianity.

Many (or most) people today would try to convince us that embracing faith in Jesus Christ is completely outside of what it is to be an American. Untrue!

Embracing Christ is the very essence, foundation, and fabric of what has made America the greatest nation in the history of the world. America is only great because of the unmerited favor and grace of God, through Jesus Christ, and it is our responsibility, duty, and honor to pass on the blessing that God has bestowed upon us, to every person and every nation around us.

And THAT'S Good News!