

July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Sermon “A Loyal Heart to God’s True Kingdom This Fourth of July”  
Given at John Adam’s Church “The First Church Congregational of Braintree, MA”

This July 4<sup>th</sup>, we find our country facing the greatest ecological disaster of all time. Oil has finally come upon our shores and is destroying a whole Gulf coast area. Fish, birds, wildlife, even sharks are dying in large numbers. The full extent of the damage may not be even known for years to come. A massive plume of oil is under the water waiting to wreak more damage. And for what? We have had over 30 years to devise new methods of energy production but it is not because the new ideas and technologies do not exist, for they do, but it is because of the lack of willingness on behalf of you and me to stand up for what is right and to demand of our democratic government that we have new energy sources such as bio-fuels, of which Henry Ford, himself believed that ethanol should run cars, of electricity, of mini-nuclear generators, of fusion energy and other resources, and oil, which has caused so much pain and disruption here and abroad, is a technology of the past. As part of our Christian heritage and ethics and with good Christian stewardship in mind, we need a responsible and caring, new, National Energy Policy, for the next fifty years that does not focus on cheap dirty fuels, but upon new and cleaner technology fuels as more improved research is done for solar and fusion technologies.

It is only because of greed, corruption and stubbornness, do we vainly place our world and our environment at the point where we are destroying ourselves. We are not showing good stewardship nor are companies like BP, when they do not have sufficient safety plans, when they do not take proper care of their equipment, when they place a whole state if not a nation at risk, just to produce oil, for their own profit, that we have to use, because new technologies that are safer and do not pollute our air and water and earth, are quelled, so that those in power and those with huge bank books can continue to exploit those without. This is arrogance. To destroy the lives of the fishermen, to ruin the beauty of the Gulf Coast, to let oil wash up on beaches, without even providing the funds to build sand and earth berms, and islands to stop the oil from entering estuaries. This is wrong, and wrong is evil. What have you or I done to stop this evil. Have we written, called or emailed our Congress people? Have we spoken out against this? Our forefathers would have and in their day they did, and they gave up their lives to protect our Country and our Democracy. What have we done? Oil is destroying us.

Our Sister Church, Union Congregational Church, invoked upon Memorial Day, George Washington’s prayer. The prayer was read by Specialist Scott Jensen, who has just returned from serving our country in Iraq, for which we are all thankful to God, for his safe return and grateful for his service to our democracy and to the democracy that we are building in Iraq. Some would say that we have protected oil interests, which may be true, but this Fourth of July, may we all place selfishness aside, and pray that true peace, love, Christianity and Freedom comes to the people of Iraq that they may enjoy some day soon, the democracy that all Americans, are so graciously blessed with.

George Washington’s prayer was entitled:

## Prayer for Our Nation

“Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and be glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord and confusion, from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be peace and justice at home and that, through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble suffer not our trust in Thee to fail. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

-- Prayer of George Washington, President of the United States of America, prayed as he concluded his 2<sup>nd</sup> term as President.

Who are we? We are all of us, those of you here in church today, and those of you watching on television, the children of this nation. We are the recipients of the blessings of this prayer and of God. If you're an American, this prayer has affected you. It has blessed you and by God's grace it is part of you. George Washington's life matters. Your life matters. George Washington, made a difference, Scott Jensen's life is making a difference. Caleb French's life, who is a Revolutionary War Soldier, buried across Elm Street in the First Parish's Cemetery, made a difference. We are all being affected by that today. Caleb is a name that you do not hear very often though today, the female version is the popular name of Kalee. Caleb is a Hebrew name that comes from the term Ka, which refers to heart and to dog. The heart of a dog, which may be translated as being "A LOYAL HEART." The most famous Caleb in Hebrew times was "Caleb was one of twelve Israelite leaders sent by Moses to explore the Promised Land." Our American soldier across the street here was Caleb French, was a 21 year old drummer in the American Army. He may have not recognized at the time that his sacrifice his service would touch our lives today. The same is true with George Washington. But you seen, we are significant to God and our lives and their lives do count, do make a difference and there is a plan by God for all of us. Caleb FRENCH was born 15 DEC 1757, and died 1823. He married Releafe FAXON. She was born 1752, and died 1836. During the Revolutionary war, when Caleb was ordered to march to Hough's Neck, which is today in Quincy, Mass., and to protect it, Caleb, as a drummer and as a private, may have felt that he, too, was insignificant in the big picture. But I must disagree. God had a plan for Caleb's life, and it was to help protect this new nation, preserve democracy and to make America stronger for the future. That is exactly what Caleb and others like him did. And God has a plan for your life too. You may feel that you are not involved, that your life is not significant, that there is meaning lacking in what you do. Then change that, reach out, and take the hand of God and find out what Jesus has in store for you. Make a difference. There are so many today who try to drown out their lives in alcohol, drugs, or whatever is the current addiction of the day. What you're really saying is that life, your

life, is meaningless. Its just about today. Caleb's life was not just about the day. He has left our country, defending the new democracy, preserving life, liberty and the pursuit happiness, as a better land. Caleb's legacy is not only the hundreds of children and relatives that he left when he passed away, but in reality, his legacy is us, for we all have benefited from Caleb's sacrifice and from his service to this country. Caleb's life touched the Vinton family, the Thayer family, the Hobart family, the Parmenter family, and many, many more families. We are his legacy and his life had meaning on God's terms. God saw the big picture. God knew that Caleb's sacrifice was not in vain. That his service to the country had meaning. God used Caleb to help BUILD America! And today I believe that God is challenging all of us, and that is YOU too, to serve this country and to make a difference. When was the last time you got involved, when you wrote or called or emailed your Congress people, or that you went to church, that you sought out God and found out His will for your life? What is your legacy going to be? Will you make a difference? Today, we need you to come here to church and support true democracy and the Christian life.

Freedom is not free. And so many have sacrificed so you could enjoy the freedoms you have. In Germany, prior to World War II, Paul Von Hindenburg's portrait, who supported a democratic Germany, was placed on a propaganda coin, by the Nazi's, who in reality supported a vicious dictator, Hitler, a National Socialist, who did not support true democracy. I have that 5 dollar coin right here. It's real. The people were fooled into losing democracy. The German people were fooled, out of democracy, during a time of great unemployment, not because they were not smart, but because they were tricked by an evil force. Don't be fooled out of democracy today. This coin is the PROOF that it can happen. And do not think that democracy can be sustained without your positive protection of it. In World War II, Hitler determined to destroy Poland by destroying its ties to its past and to its heroes. In Krakow, Hitler had the cemeteries bulldozed. He did not want people to value or believe in or have ties to their past. Today, evil is still trying to overcome democracy. Greed, corruption and corporate greed is threatening our country. It is up to people like you, the Caleb French's of today, to rise up and take heed to the call from God. Why invest in the stocks, bonds, or products that those corporations make? Without your Christian involvement, democracy and its freedoms are being threatened. Will you answer the call? Our freedoms and Constitution and way of life, and the very beauty of this nation, needs God's protection and our service. Hitler pretended to be a builder and built back the German nation but then, because of his hatreds, he destroyed Germany and nearly Western Civilization. As Christians, we must be aware of wolves in sheep's clothing. Hitler remarkably referred to himself as being a wolf and Hitler even named one of his bunkers as the Wolf's Lair. Hitler was a destroyer. Hitler pushed the German system way to far and destroyed not only their democracy but their country and their people.

The other coin, I brought a picture with me today, is that of a Caesar of Rome. But unlike Hitler, this Caesar was Constantine. He took a stand. It could have cost Constantine not just his throne, but his very life. He took the stand that no longer would the Roman Empire kill or maim or harass Christians. In so many parts of the world today, that is no longer true. In many foreign countries, where our army sometimes has

to go, they have to protect the lives of Christians, because the world rejects the love of God and in many places harasses or even kills Christians, who profess their faith in God. Constantine saw that the best for his empire was Christ's love. He converted and became a Christian, and today, Constantinople, is named after him. Constantine took a stand. Caleb took a stand and was a builder of Christian society. Will you take a stand, will you too be a builder? Come to church and bring your family too. Be a builder of our society, not a destroyer. Caleb was a U.S. soldier who protected our country, our way of life and the democratic system. He would not let it be destroyed.

Huge corporations, like Visa, are offering digital currency. Right now it's just in the form of a special credit card like plastic card. But that will slowly change. I used to think only governments could issue coins and currency. This cashless society with bar coding on hands and foreheads is warned in the Bible to Christians, that it is a sign of the end times and the coming anti-Christ. Will we pay heed to that warning? Will we oppose control through such a dangerous technology that can track and control every living being, and eliminate our God given freedoms and rights? Subtle threats to democracy and to freedom come to us many times in the form of new and efficient technologies. Constantine's coin represents a Holy King building his good kingdom. Hitler's coin represents a man, fooling others and saying that he serves democracy, when in fact, his socialism, his dictatorship, leads to defeat and destruction. George Washington was a Christian and he knew not only how to ethically fight a battle but also how to ethically relinquish power, when its use was over, as he did in 1783. John Adams, the second president, and the inspiration, see the Braintree Instructions, the forerunner of the Declaration of Independence, for Thomas Jefferson, who penned the Declaration of Independence and one of the founders of the Constitution, went to this First Church in Braintree. Washington and Adams were both Christians, founding America, based on Christianity and Christian ethics. Today, I invite you to come and attend this church and reach out not only to the past but to the future, and find a place that is concerned with your needs and your problems and finding solutions for them, as we seek God's guidance, in this church, the church of Caleb French, the Revolutionary War soldier.

Just before December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day, which was the United States official entry into World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had entered into an agreement to help protect Great Britain from the Nazi's in what was called the "Atlantic Charter." That Charter should be remembered today, on this Fourth of July, as being a document to protect all people's freedoms, including all Americans. It was the document designed to in general protect Western Civilization and to in specific to protect the "Four Great Freedoms." Those Freedoms are, 1. freedom of speech and expression, (2) freedom of every person to worship God in his own way, (3) freedom from want, and (4) freedom from fear. Two of these freedoms—from fear and want. After his election to a third term in 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began to espouse more strongly the cause of Great Britain and its allies in World War II. An indication of this came in a major speech before Congress on 6 January 1941. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2010). Today, we are watching as the enemy is not always an evil dictator like Hitler, but sometimes our own fallible and grasping human nature, that is causing ecological

disasters only because of poor judgment, poor planning, inconsideration towards the very nature and environment which supports life itself, and from our lack of planning for the safety and security of our natural resources as well as of our country.

In Sister Theresa's book, "City of Joy", she reminds us all that we are "our brother's keeper." We are responsible not only for our immediate friends and family, but we are responsible for the people of Calcutta, India, and for the people of Shreveport, Louisiana. We are responsible for donating our time and funds, and help, and to speak out, in support of the people and wildlife, our fellow beings, whose lives are being devastated by the oil slicks in the Gulf of Mexico, part of the Atlantic. We must seek action that Congress will impose new safety regulations, that will prevent such devastation from ever happening again, in order to protect and help those lives that have been hurt.

Today, we need people that will call Congress, support the Governor of Louisiana, and call for better regulations and rules towards protecting the beauty of our great land. Greed driven corporations are making a wreck of the environment, and it is left to you, on this watch, to do something, to get involved, like Caleb French did, like George Washington did, like Specialist Jensen, does. God is calling you. Answer it. America is counting on you, today, on this July 4<sup>th</sup>. Jesus sees the big picture and He has a place for you in that, and in Zion, the City of God, the true City of Joy. May we have a loyal heart that seeks Freedom for All People, today this great 4<sup>th</sup> of July.