

# AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

*As taught by Pastor Ron Baity  
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Today, we go back to our beginning and note our Christian Heritage once again.

- I. FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, THE PILGRIMS WERE COMMON PEOPLE.
  - A. They had no special characteristics to commend them. They were:
    1. Merchants
    2. Artisans
    3. Farmers
  - B. None of them were of noble birth.
  - C. From the Divine perspective, two great truths stood out:
    1. They were called by God.
      - a. They were on a mission for Him.
      - b. The average loss of life on an Atlantic crossing was 50% of the passengers.
      - c. Yet, the pilgrim men brought the women and children with them.
      - d. They had a strong sense that God was calling them to this expedition.
    2. They were sold out to that call.
      - a. They had counted the cost.
      - b. They knew they could perish in the attempt.
      - c. Their statement was: "Though they should lose their lives in this action, yet they might have comfort in the same, and their endeavors would be honorable."
- II. THEY WERE SEVERELY TESTED, YET ENDURED.
  - A. On the Mayflower, many horrible conditions erupted.
    1. The ship leaked water.
    2. Terrible storms confronted the ship, producing constant wetness.
    3. There was much seasickness and disease.
    4. There was constant jeering from the pagan sailors.
  - B. After they arrived on these shores, horrible conditions continued.

1. During their first winter at Plymouth, they lost half their numbers to sickness, having been weakened by the crossing.
  2. They came to these shores with 102 people, but only 55 survived the first winter.
  3. They had to erect shelters in the winter snow.
- C. After the first winter, the death rate at Plymouth was the lowest of any colony in the history of the Americas.
- III. THE PILGRIMS RESPONDED TO THE WARNINGS OF OTHERS ABOUT COMING TO AMERICA WITH THESE STATEMENTS:
- A. "All great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courages."
  - B. "It was granted that the dangers were great, but not desperate, and the difficulties were many, but not invincible...and all of them, through the help of God, by fortitude and patience, might either be borne or overcome."
  - C. "Their condition was ordinary. Their ends were good and honorable, their calling lawful and urgent, and therefore they might expect the blessing of God in their proceeding."
- IV. THE PILGRIMS GAVE FIVE REASONS FOR BELIEVING THEY WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL.
- A. "We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us...and that He will graciously prosper our endeavors according to the simplicity of our hearts therein."
  - B. "We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country (England) and hardened to the difficulties of a strange and hard land (Holland) which yet in a great part we have by patience overcome."
  - C. The people are as industrious and frugal as any company of people in the world."
  - D. We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord...and by virtue whereof we do hold ourselves straightly tied to all care of each other's good."
  - E. "It is not with us as with other men, whom shall things can discourage, or small discontentment's cause to wish themselves at home again."
- V. THEY WERE TRULY PILGRIMS COMING TO AMERICA FOR A PURPOSE
- A. Bradford stated that the Pilgrims' main motive for coming to America was "The propagating and advancing of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world."

- B. They believed that God led them to separate from the Church of England.
- C. The Mayflower Compact, put together in the captain's quarters on the Mayflower, stated their mission in part: "Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith."
  - 1. It was the first time on American soil that believing Christians covenanted together in the name of God to create their own civil government in written constitutional forms.
  - 2. The Compact laid the foundation for American constitutional government.
- D. They believed that God has set certain priorities for the human race.
  - 1. That those priorities do not include:
    - a. Rape
    - b. Murder
    - c. Stealing
  - 2. That God's priorities do include from the Biblical position:
    - a. That the human race should practice the two great commandments of Christ.
    - b. That they should create a society with liberty and justice for all.
- E. The Pilgrims were covenanted together:
  - 1. As a congregation of believers in Christ.
  - 2. That they were to live out the Gospel in America as a people on a mission.
- F. The Pilgrims had a strong emphasis on daily repentance.
- G. The object of their Bible commonwealth was to provide an example of Christian living to the rest of the world.
- H. Their vision was based on Biblical principles:
  - 1. Not on ethnic identity.
  - 2. Not on race.
  - 3. Not on heredity.
  - 4. Not on nobility.
- I. Before they left Holland to come to America, their pastor met with them and warned them in a farewell letter against:

1. Being unloving.
  2. Being intolerant.
  3. Being exclusive.
- J. They paid a price when they left Europe.
1. They left their native soil and country.
  2. They left their lands and their living.
  3. They left their friends and familiar acquaintances.
- K. Bradford gave us their motivation for coming: "They rested on His providence, and knew Whom they had believed. They knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."
- L. May their spirit be our spirit as we live with Heaven's views before us!