

THOUGHTS

BY DOUGLAS W. SCHROEDER
SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

AMERICA AT 250

J We were privileged this month to participate in an auspicious occasion: the 250th anniversary of our country's declared independence! The thought struck me that at the next big event, the 300th – God granting our land survives that long – our sons will be 80 and 83! Big national events do not come along that often! As Christians, we have much to be thankful for regarding our nation.

Do not believe the lie (or misinformation) that America was never a Christian country. Quotes from the founding fathers and presidents are plenty, and here are a few:

U “My most cherished possession I wish I could leave you is my faith in Jesus Christ, for with Him and mothering else you can be happy, but without Him and with all else you’ll never be happy.” Patrick Henry (1736–1799; American governor, patriot, and Founding Father)

“The future and success of America is not this constitution, but the laws of God upon which this constitution is founded.” James Madison (1751–1856; Founding Father, 4th U.S. President)

“The only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible.” Benjamin Rush (1745–1813; Founding Father, educator, social reformer)

L If you wish to pursue a deeper understanding of the connection between the Judeo-Christian faith and the formation of the United States, an excellent work I recommend is *Under God* by Toby Mac and Michael Tait.

A recent survey indicated that only 33% of young people in our country are proud to be American, down from about 70% in the 2000’s. We have a great deal of work to do to counter the negativity about America. For all its faults, the bedrock of freedom in our land is Christianity, and the young need to know what a privilege it is to live in a free culture!

Y I WANT FAITH LIKE...

I am about to start a new sermon series with that title. In it, I will explore biblical people I admire for their faith and the circumstances the Lord used to shape it. Frankly, while I envy the dogged determination and phenomenal trust these people have, I would never want to go through their hardships.

2026 That seems to be the conundrum; we want strong, vibrant faith, but we don’t want to be put to the test! Trust in God grows through trials and hardships. God seems to step up the testing over time such that we face new, tougher challenges. The track record of the Lord’s faithfulness and love is supposed to prepare us for the next challenge.



*The Bible is God's Word...Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh...
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

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Do we ever get to the point where we can say with James, the half- brother of Jesus, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (James 1:2)? Can we grow to adopt a highly mature spiritual attitude like that of Joseph, who considered potentially crushing personal setbacks as stepping stones to greater blessings? For all the hard times his brothers gave him, Joseph took it in stride; his brothers meant to harm him, but God meant it for good (see Genesis ch. 45). How do we get that kind of faith in God without being put through the mill? The short answer is, we don't get that kind of faith unless we are put through the mill! We have a great deal to learn from those who struggled and yet put their hope in God!

STING OF DEATH ILLUSTRATION HAS BEEN HELPFUL

In I Corinthians 15, Paul the Apostle writes, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.58). It has been several years since I was stung by a bee while riding a motorcycle. I thank God for that experience because it helped me better understand the discussion in that passage about the sting of death. Since then, many have thanked me for the analogy, explaining the pain, frustration, and loss of death as a venomous sting that fades over time. Similarly, our preoccupation with the deceased, emotional suffering, and distraction fades over time. As Christians, these are replaced with anticipation of reunion with those who have died with faith in the Lord, Jesus. We have a merciful Father who heals us, even from the sting of death!

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE HANDLING

The teen who had graduated from high school three days prior attempted to light a firework in his hand. It blew up instantly and took his hand off. Pardon the pun, but the arrogance makes us think we have a handle on things, even while being astoundingly stupid. Hardly a day goes by when several people take unwarranted risks, often in a bid to create a video to impress the world.

Christians are to be fundamentally sound in their thinking. Conservative Christianity is not well respected by contemporary society. However, sincere faith and sensibility team up to bless those who respect wisdom. When I was young, I envied the excitement of the rowdy crowd. But as it violated God's will, I never wanted to be part of it. As I have grown in faith and wisdom, I thank God that I was protected from the "excitement" that harms.

*Blessings,
Douglas W. Schroeder*

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