

MARK & FRIENDS PROGRAM RESOURCES

When the Pulpit Speaks to the Culture

Tim Barton on Courageous Pastors, Practical Biblical Application, and the Church's Public Witness

Tim Barton

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Program Summary

In this Wednesday edition of Mark & Friends, Tim Barton concludes his two-part message on the biblical influence and pastoral leadership he says helped shape early America. Using printed sermons from the First and Second Great Awakenings, Barton shows how pastors applied Scripture to public issues ranging from natural disasters and education to war, economics, gambling, slavery, marriage, law, and elections. He then turns to stories of clergy such as Jonas Clark, James Caldwell, John Peter Muhlenberg, and Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg to illustrate what he describes as courageous Christian leadership during the Revolutionary era. Barton's final challenge is aimed directly at today's church: biblical faith should not remain merely private or inward-facing, but should shape how believers think, serve, lead, and respond to the culture around them.

Key Takeaways

- Barton emphasizes that Great Awakening preaching often connected Scripture directly to current events and practical questions facing the community.
- He contrasts inward-focused revival with outward-facing awakening, arguing that genuine spiritual renewal should affect both personal lives and the surrounding culture.
- The sermons he highlights addressed education, military service, science, medicine, economics, taxation, gambling, alcohol policy, slavery, marriage, civil law, and elections.
- His recurring question is not merely, 'What do I believe?' but, 'What does the Word of God say about what is happening around me, and how should I respond?'
- Barton argues that parents carry a God-given responsibility for the formation and education of their children.
- He points to anti-slavery sermons and 'higher law' arguments as examples of pastors confronting laws they believed violated God's moral standards.
- Pastors such as Jonas Clark, James Caldwell, and John Peter Muhlenberg are presented as examples of clergy whose leadership extended beyond Sunday preaching.
- The story of James Caldwell illustrates courage under severe personal loss and opposition while continuing to preach.
- The Muhlenberg brothers illustrate two different views of pastoral involvement in public life and how circumstances eventually reshaped Frederick Muhlenberg's perspective.
- The closing challenge is that pastors and churches should recover courage, biblical clarity, and a willingness to lead rather than withdraw from difficult cultural questions.

Scripture References

- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- Acts 4:18-20
- Romans 13:1-7
- Hebrews 11:1-40
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Micah 6:8
- Proverbs 31:8-9
- Ephesians 5:8-11
- Matthew 5:13-16

Quote of the Day

“They took cultural issues and said, ‘What does the Word of God say, and what should we learn from what the Word of God says based on what we're seeing in the culture around us?’”

Broadcast Notes

Tim Barton resumes where Tuesday's program ended, displaying printed sermons from the First and Second Great Awakenings. He argues that their popularity shows how frequently pastors applied the Bible to current events and public questions. The examples he discusses include sermons prompted by earthquakes and fires, education of children, military service, creation, medicine, economic distress, taxation, gambling, alcohol laws, slavery, marriage, the Fugitive Slave Law, elections, and standards for public officials. Barton uses these examples to contrast private revival with what he calls outward-facing awakening. The second half of the message focuses on specific pastors during the Revolutionary era. He describes Reverend Jonas Clark's congregation at Lexington, the 'Fighting Parson' James Caldwell, and John Peter Muhlenberg's dramatic call for men to join the Continental Army. He also recounts Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg's journey from skepticism about pastoral involvement to public leadership, ultimately becoming the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Barton closes by arguing that the church's influence was essential to America's early development and by challenging pastors and churches today to recover biblical courage and public leadership.

Practical Applications

- Ask myself whether my faith is only inward-facing or whether it is shaping how I serve, speak, vote, work, parent, and engage my community.
- When a major cultural issue arises, begin with Scripture rather than partisan talking points, social media, or assumptions.
- Pray for pastors to have courage, wisdom, patience, and careful instruction when addressing difficult moral and cultural questions.
- If I am a parent or grandparent, take greater responsibility for the spiritual and moral formation of the children entrusted to me.
- Study one historical sermon mentioned in the program and note how the pastor moved from biblical text to practical application.
- Learn to distinguish respectful submission to legitimate authority from obedience that would require me to violate clear biblical conviction.
- Refuse to treat injustice selectively; if I condemn one form of exploitation, ask whether I am also willing to oppose present-day abuse and human trafficking.
- Examine whether fear of criticism has made me silent about biblical truth that should be spoken with grace and courage.
- Look for one concrete way my church or Christian community can serve the public good without losing its Gospel-centered identity.
- Remember that courage is not loudness or anger; it is faithfulness to Jesus when obedience is costly.

Today's Challenge

Choose one issue in today's culture that I care deeply about. Before reading commentary or posting an opinion, spend time finding the relevant biblical passages, pray for wisdom, and write a short statement that answers three questions: What does Scripture clearly teach? Where do I need humility because the application is complex? What faithful action can I personally take? Then ask whether my response reflects both truth and the character of Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Father, teach me to love Your Word enough to bring every part of my life under its authority. Give me courage to speak truth, but also patience, humility, and careful instruction so that my words reflect Jesus. Keep my faith from becoming merely private or inward-facing. Show me how to serve my family, church, community, and nation with integrity. Help me recognize injustice, resist evil, honor rightful authority, and obey You above all when human commands conflict with Your truth. Give pastors and ministry leaders wisdom and courage to preach Your Word in season and out of season. Guard me from fear, anger, pride, and political idolatry. Let my public witness grow out of a transformed heart, and make me faithful wherever You have placed me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Tim Barton

President of WallBuilders

Tim Barton is President of WallBuilders, a national organization focused on America's history and biblical heritage. WallBuilders maintains an extensive collection of original Founding-era documents, including handwritten material from signers of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. An ordained minister, Tim has served in church ministry as a youth minister, worship leader, and assistant pastor. Today he speaks nationwide on American history, faith, culture, and public policy, and consults with state and federal legislators. He has appeared on numerous national television and radio programs and is a contributor to The Epoch Times. Tim's emphasis is helping people understand the past, connect it to the present, and live with conviction for the future while following Jesus wholeheartedly.

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Mark & Friends Welcome Song

We're glad you're here, we're glad you're here,
Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.
It's so good to see you, we hope that it's clear,
Everyone loves you, we're glad you're here.

We're glad you're here, we're glad you're here, Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near. It's so good to see you, we hope that it's clear, everyone loves you,

we're glad you're here. Reading from 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 2. Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke, and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4.2 Oh magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.

It's Wednesday, August 19th, 2026. And today we conclude Tim Barton's message from WallBuilders on the biblical influence and courageous pastors who helped shape early America and his challenge for the church today. Here's Tim Barton.

I want to show you some original sermons, first and Second Great Awakening sermons. Also important for you to know, the ability I have to show you these sermons is because these sermons were printed. But for a sermon to be printed, that took a lot of time and money and effort, which meant that these were the more popular sermons that were demanded enough that a printer thought I can make enough money by doing this and selling this.

I'm saying that it's important for you to understand these are the popular sermons. Okay, so these are the sermons that had the best reach at that time. This is just some examples.

I'm going to give you maybe 15 or 20 of them. Here is a sermon First Great Awakening. You can see it in the middle says November 1755.

It's a discourse occasioned by the earthquakes. This is a First Great Awakening sermon. Now, let me give you another one.

I'm going to connect some dots for you. This one is 1760. Again, First Great Awakening.

It's occasioned by the great fire in Boston. How in the world are your First Great Awakening? Popular sermons dealing with earthquakes and fires. And by the way, why would they do this? Well, first of all, it says occasioned by the earthquake occasioned by the great fire.

There was a significant event that happened in their community happened in their culture. And pastor said, well, let's talk about it. Well, why are they going to talk about it? They connected Bible to what was going on.

But what Bible versus you connecting and think about this. There's an earthquake. What are you going to do? Well, are there biblical examples of earthquakes? Sure, there are.

Sure, there are. There's actually far more than most of us think about, because we might think about, right? Like Jesus, the tomb. There's an earthquake.

Sure. But there's an awful lot in the Old Testament, too, by the way, same thing with fires. One of the things that's interesting is they recognized, and these are in both sermons that natural disasters can be a wake up call to you from the Lord.

If there is sin in your midst and you need to repent of sin, maybe God's trying to get your attention on this. They took cultural issues and said, what does the Word of God say? And what should we learn from what the Word of God says based on what we're seeing in culture around us? Well, natural disasters. Here's one, the city of Sodom.

Now, this is First Great Awakening. It's upon the arraignment and condemnation of Benjamin Goad for his prodigious villainy. Now, I'm not going to tell you what all he did, even though adults, you probably can handle it.

It's gross. But the bottom line is sodomy is pretty self-explanatory. I would assume for most of us who are familiar with the Bible.

This is interesting. This is, again, a First Great Awakening sermon, and it's a sermon dealing with sexual deviance from what the Word of God says. The thing that you are going to see as I show you more and more sermons, what was significant about the first and Second Great Awakening, it was the practical application of the Bible.

See, in American history, I don't have time to go through all this. In American history, every 20, 30 or 40 years, there's a major pouring of God on this nation by God's grace and mercy. God pours his spirit out and there's a revival in our nation.

There's only been two awakenings. And I can actually walk you through a lot of the history behind a lot of the other revivals and what the difference is. In the majority of revivals, especially the last 150 years, the majority revivals in America, we have made it personal and introspective.

The first and Second Great Awakening, they said, we need to take what God is doing here and go there. They made the Bible applicable. It was outward facing, not inward facing.

Most revivals today are inward facing. It's not taking what God is doing and going and impacting the culture around us. It's changing your life, not impacting the culture.

Not to digress. Here's another sermon. This is the importance of early and proper education of children, both as it respects themselves and mankind in general.

This is huge. Now, this is Second Great Awakening. 1795 is the beginning of the Second Great Awakening.

But this is huge because the Word of God could not be much more clear on whose responsibility it is to educate their kids. And I will tell you, up until COVID happened, most parents never even thought about what their kids were being taught in schools. And then COVID happened and a lot of parents were like, wait, what are they saying? Or what are they not saying? COVID actually was a major wake-up call for a lot of people for a lot of reasons, but especially education.

And it's interesting that a lot of parents don't recognize, God is going to hold you accountable for what your kids are and aren't learning, for how they are being disciplined and aren't being disciplined. Why? Because God entrusted them to you, not to the government. This is a big deal.

Let's keep going. First great awakening sermon, religion and patriotism, the constituents of a good soldier. This is literally a pastor who was giving a military commission send-off because it was the French and Indian war.

There was a big detachment of men from his church about to go off. You need to understand what the Word of God says about war and what your role is and maybe even what it shouldn't be. Now, this is not a new idea in Christianity because you can go back to early philosophical, biblical thinkers, Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

And actually from them is where we get some ideas of just war theory. Again, these are not new ideas, but this is something First Great Awakening pastors dealt with. This is the existence of God demonstrated by the works of creation.

This was a sermon dealing with creationism and evolution. Now, again, this is way before Charles Darwin because your first and Second Great Awakening. But as long as there were people who didn't want to believe in God, there were people trying to conjure up ideas of how we got here without God.

This is not a new idea, but pastors in the first and Second Great Awakening, they were grounding people in the truth and the application of the Word of God for daily living. So scientific controversies they covered. Here is one on the relation of the medical profession to the ministry.

So dealing with medical things, healthcare, again, all first and Second Great Awakening sermons. This is the present commercial distress. Commercial is economic distress.

Here is a sermon. The character and tendency of the property tax, the permanent system of taxation. How property taxes is huge.

Most pastors wouldn't have any idea what this is or isn't about. And I hope in this room, you're all the exception. But does the Bible actually deal with economics or taxing issues? Absolutely it does.

And if you're not familiar with it, go talk to this guy back here at this table. Go buy some pirate money books and he'll talk you through it. The reality is this is something the Bible is very clear on.

And just because pastors haven't taught with clarity doesn't mean the Bible is not clear on it. Let me keep going. This is the sinful and pernicious nature of gaming.

It's a sermon against gambling. Now, wait a second. What Bible verse would you use? And don't give me, well, they cast lots for his robe.

That's not gambling. They didn't put money on the line for that, right? That's like you playing paper, rock, scissors to see who gets it. That's not gambling, right? This is what's interesting.

This is a moral issue where the Bible offers guidance. And most Christians and even most pastors have a hard time coming up with what's in the Bible. By the way, for your help, all of these are on the WallBuilders website.

You can actually go read all the verses they use in their sermon. But let me keep going. This is a sermon.

It's a good law. A sermon on the liquor law of Massachusetts. Now, why is it a good law? Because they were putting restrictions on who could make and who could buy liquor.

And they're like, this is a good law. What an interesting idea. That the pastor is guiding people on public policy, saying what is a just and an unjust law? What is a good and a bad law? Let's keep going.

The injustice and impolicy of the slave trade and the slavery of the Africans. This is a pastor saying that is unjust and immoral. They were literally addressing public policy issues, offering moral clarity on what was or wasn't biblical, moral, and ethical.

By the way, for people that today are looking at slavery and saying, America is so evil because of slavery, I would challenge. And by the way, I don't disagree that slavery is evil. And that's a blight on American history.

I don't disagree with that. But the people that are the most triggered by the fact that America was once part of slavery, an institution that we abolished more than 130 years ago, are strangely silent on the issue of human trafficking, where there are more people being trafficked today than in the entire history of the North Atlantic slave trade. OK, so get off your self-righteous couch if you're not going to stand up with intellectual consistency and say that we oppose immorality across the board.

Any of God's kids that are being misused and abused, we oppose that. Not just because it happened in America a long time ago. No, because it's still happening in America today.

In America, by the way, every major city today. This is still going on. OK, let me keep going.

This is another sermon. This is on marriage, scripturally considered. What a novel idea that there are bounds and parameters to marriage.

By the way, no Christian should ever be confused about an issue that's not confusing in scripture. And if Christians are confused about this, it's only for two

reasons. It's either because they haven't read the Bible or because their pastor hasn't taught them the Bible.

And I would challenge you, if there are people in your congregation, you might be a little humbled if you did a survey and asked people what they thought marriage was or wasn't. And actually might help inform you of things that you might need to cover more than you realize you did because you thought people already knew all this. I'm going to tell you people are way dumber than you give them credit for.

You need to guide them a lot better than you think you need to. They don't know as much as they should. Here's another sermon.

This is the higher law, the Fugitive Slave Bill. Now, what's the higher law? In this sermon, they said, hey, we understand there's a hierarchy and God's law is supreme. And the Fugitive Slave Law says that if there's an escaped slave, you're required to capture them and give them back.

But the Bible says that you're not allowed to man-steal. That's literally a violation. So the higher law, you are morally required to disobey the Fugitive Slave Law so you can submit to God's law.

Now, for people that also get challenged by that, well, then explain to me Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. When they're like, you told us not to talk about Jesus, but is it better to obey God or man? And by the way, I can go a long way in this because we can go with Daniel or Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego. In fact, for people that get confused by Romans 13 and they're like, no, you're supposed to submit to all governing authority.

And I understand this. I don't disagree with what the Bible says, but there's context to this because it says for the government exists for your good. And what the founding fathers from their pastors understood is when the government, number one, ceases to be godly, then they cease to be the authority you're supposed to submit to, number one.

But let's go a little further. If you look in Hebrews 11, our hall of faith, right? The heroes of the faith that have gone there. I want you to think through this, which one of the Hebrews 11 members of the faith hall of fame didn't commit acts of civil disobedience? And I'll wait.

In fact, the majority of the ones who are there are there for civil disobedience. Moses opposing Pharaoh, Rahab lying to the leaders. I mean, literally go through the list.

This idea that we're supposed to submit to evil as if that's godly. You've misunderstood what the Bible actually teaches. This is what they're showing in this.

If there is an immoral, ungodly law, we submit to God over ungodly laws. Let's keep going. By the way, that's covering social policy.

Here's an election sermon. I know this would trigger people. They were literally saying not just you should vote, but who to vote for.

And then they got more specific. The voice of warning to Christians on the ensuing election of a president. They literally called them by name and said, as a Christian, you cannot vote for that person.

Okay, again, this seems very triggering and modern understanding. No, no, this was common in the founding era. So common that when the founding fathers would be elected to positions, the common practice was they would bring in a pastor.

Now you see the sermon preached before John Hancock, governor, Sam Adams, lieutenant governor, and the honorable council, senate and house representatives. Every time when there was an election after the election, they brought in a pastor to come preach to all of the elected officials. And it wasn't a salvation message.

Although today we're like, they all need to be saved. That would be true today. But back then they said, no, no, no.

We want to lay this out for you. There's an expectation that God has an all in authority. And here's what it says from Deuteronomy.

Here's what it says from numbers in Leviticus. Here's what we learn in judges. They literally walked them through places in the Bible where God laid out standards for government and governing officials.

This is the foundation. Now, again, why this matters, because this is the sermons that were the most popular sermons, the most printed and reprinted sermons in the First Great Awakening. And this is the major event that happens right before America's birth to be a nation.

What do you think the founding fathers were learning for decades leading up to this moment? And let me tie in one more thought. So this is Bishop Charles Galloway. He was an Anglican bishop.

He was also a historian, but he wrote a book about, or at least wrote about as an essay about the early pastors in America. Here's what he said about them. He said, mighty men, they were men of iron nerve and strong hand and unblemished cheek and a heart of flame.

God needed not reed shaken by the wind, nor men clothed in soft raiment, but heroes of hardihood and lofty courage. And such were the sons of the mighty who responded to the divine call. Now, that's the way he described the early pastors.

And actually, if we knew more about their stories, we'd know that. Because for example, when Paul Revere makes his famous midnight ride, Paul Revere is not arbitrarily riding, the British are coming, the British are coming. No, he's writing specifically to Lexington and Concord because they got words.

The British are coming to take their military stores, the gunpowder away, the guns away from those areas. But also he was writing to warn John Hancock and Sam Adams because the military order from the British, it says our business was to seize a quantity of military stores and the bodies of Mr. Hancock and Adams. The British appointed governor in Massachusetts said that he would grant a pardon to anybody on the wrong side of the issue, except for two people.

He said, Hancock and Adams have gone too far. They can never be forgiven. So Paul Revere is writing to warn them, guys, the British are coming.

You got to get out of here. Well, where are they? Like, how does he know where to find them? Well, Paul Revere rides to the home of the Reverend Jonas Clark. The Reverend Jonas Clark is the pastor at Lexington.

Now, why did Paul Revere think that John Hancock and Sam Adams would be there? Well, first of all, Jonas Clark was a friend and mentor to Hancock and Adams, but it's even deeper than that. Does anybody know what John Hancock's dad did for a living? He was a pastor. What did John Hancock's grandfather do for a living? He was a pastor.

Oh, yeah, yeah. What church did they pastor? The church in Lexington. He literally was in his hometown with the pastor that took over after his dad and grandfather had passed away.

He's with the guy that he's known for years, who is a friend and mentor, carrying in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Paul Revere, when he makes his famous midnight ride, he's telling Jonas Clark, hey, the British are coming, and says, well, will your men be ready? And Jonas Clark actually got a little offended is what historians tell us. Jonas Clark, when he was asked, well, your men stand up and tell the British, no, they can't take our guns and gunpowder.

He said, of course they will. I've trained them for this very moment. Well, the next morning was the proof in the pudding because the next morning when the British showed up, there were more than 80 Americans that opposed roughly 800 British.

And Lexington Green, it's the front yard of the church. They assembled in the front of the church to tell the British, you can't have our guns and gunpowder. When the British leave Lexington Green, they march to Concord.

The top right is Lexington Green. Top left is Concord Bridge. Bottom left is the road back to Boston.

Bottom right, you have the Battle of Bunker Hill. Well, the top right, those men are from the church of Reverend Jonas Clark. If you go to the top left at Concord Bridge, the majority of the militia comes from the church of the Reverend William Emerson.

If you go to the bottom left, when the British are marching back to Boston, the people that opposed them on the way back, the Reverend Payson Phillips and Benjamin Balch, as examples, led the men, the militia from their congregations, and then when you get to the bottom right, the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Reverend Joseph Willard had two full companies there from his church that he

had assembled. It literally, at the very beginning, it wasn't George Washington fighting for independence. It was pastors and Christians from their churches that were leading the movement.

And by the way, as this happens in Boston, people respond from all over the nation. David Avery from Vermont brought 20 people. Stephen Farrar from New Hampshire brought 97 men from his church.

Joseph Willard, I mentioned there at Bunker Hill, raised two full companies. John Steele from Pennsylvania recruited over 900 men from his church. John Peter Muhlenberg had 300 parishioners that signed up.

They became the 8th Virginia Brigade. This is what's interesting, and I just want to give you two examples, and I got to land this plane. The first one I want to point out, the Reverend James Caldwell, he was offered the commanding position of the militia from New Jersey.

He was a pastor, and he was offered that because he was an incredible leader. But he acknowledged, he said, I don't know anything about military. He said, give it to one of these guys.

And no, he said, I'll just be the chaplain for our forces. And so he was a chaplain. Well, in the midst of being a chaplain, he actually preaches every Sunday when he's able to.

And he's given sermons for these men. Well, as the war unfolds, he's very active in the midst of it. His men from his church are very active in the midst of it.

And one day at one of the battles, they run out of wadding. Now, by the way, if you want to look this guy up later too, he also has another moniker. He's known as the Fighting Parson.

And it's worth noting that nearly every Presbyterian minister in America were given the moniker Fighting Parsons because the Presbyterians were one of the several denominations that got very, very involved. But he was known as the Fighting Parson. And as he is involved, you have the Battle of Springfield where his men run out of wadding at the edge of town.

He says, follow me. And he leads a group back to the local church. He goes inside and grabs a stack of hymn books.

They were Isaac Watts hymn books. He was a famous hymn writer of the day. He came out with a stack of hymn books.

He held the hymn book up in the air. And his famous line in that moment, he says, let's give them Watts boys, put Watts into them. And they started handing out hymn books so they could tear out paper for wadding to fight back.

Okay. Well, during this same battle, the British already knew who he was. And they sent a detachment to his house to lay an ambush for him.

He wasn't there. Now, arguably, they didn't know that, but he wasn't there. The detachment opened fire on his house.

His wife and kids were inside. His wife was killed. They then set fire to his house with his kids inside.

One of the neighbors was able to run over and sneak in the back and rescue the kids before they burned alive. He comes home to find his house is burned to the ground. His wife's been murdered.

And his kids are off staying with family friends. And he got up in church that Sunday. Now, from that moment on, he carried two pistols with him at all times because the British had put a price on his head.

But he got up in church. He opened his Bible. He drew a pistol, set it on one side, drew a pistol, set it on the other side of his Bible.

He looked at his congregation, said the British will not stop me from preaching. But they are welcome to try. Now, the reason, again, this matters is when you look at these guys who birthed America, these pastors, it was incredible courage and leadership and incredible sacrifice they made along the way.

Last example is John Peter Muhlenberg. And John Peter Muhlenberg also, where that circle is, that's Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1776 is when he actually gets really involved in the revolution.

But up to that point, he's a pastor who's also a member of the state legislature. So for Christians to think, well, pastors shouldn't be involved in politics. Well, he was literally part of the state assembly.

So he totally turned that one on its head. In the state assembly, they are recognizing, they actually just a month before, they had a big fight with the British. And their militia repelled the British.

But they're like, we have to raise like an official army. And in their state assembly, they start discussing, well, who could be the commander? And he was nominated. And they said, he should be our commander.

He got his commission. As soon as he got his commission, he jumped on a horse and rode all the way back to where his home church was. And it was in Woodstock, Virginia.

And it was over 200 miles on horseback. He made it back in time for Sunday service. And he got up in his pulpit.

Back then, it was an elevated pulpit. It was a small church. The pulpit is center front in the church, because that's the sound system.

And he began to tell the crowd what had just happened in Williamsburg. And that we're going to war. He opens up his Bible and reads from Ecclesiastes chapter 3. There's a time and a season, a purpose for everything under heaven.

And he gets to verse 8. There's a time for peace and a time for war. He said, this is now a time for war. He closed his Bible and had a closing prayer.

Well, at the end of the closing prayer, the normal process was he would get down. He would go off in the back. And he would take off his black clerical robe.

But he did something nobody had ever seen done. He stood in his pulpit, and he began to disrobe in the pulpit. And he revealed that he was wearing the uniform of a Continental Army officer.

He let everybody take it in for a second. He then started to dismount. And he says, brethren, we came to this land to enjoy our freedoms.

But if we don't get involved today, we will lose everything that we came here to enjoy. He says, I'm going to fight to defend freedom. And I want you to come with me.

They had a sign-up sheet at the back of the church. And they had over 300 men get signed up at the back of the church. Here's what's awesome.

There were not 300 men in his church. So how did 300 men get signed up? Well, it's true. Some people came from the town.

But here's my favorite part. There were kids and moms in the congregation that signed up their dads and their husbands. They were like, oh, he's for sure going.

Absolutely. Okay, here's what's interesting. John Peter Muhlenberg ends up becoming a major general.

This is from the painting of the Surrender at Yorktown. He is a major general there with George Washington at the Surrender. He was part all the way through.

His men were there at Valley Forge. His brother found out what was going on. His brother opposed what he was doing.

Now, their father was the founder of the Lutheran Church in America. So these two brothers are both pastors, Lutheran pastors. And Frederick pastors in New York City.

And as he's pastoring in New York City, he writes his brother and says, what are you doing? You shouldn't be getting involved like this. A pastor's job is to stay behind the pulpit. And this is part of the letter he wrote him.

You would have acted for the best if you'd kept up this business beginning. I now give you my thoughts in brief. I think you were wrong.

Now, I don't have time to go through the exchange of their letters back and forth. But what I do want to point out is that Frederick was under the impression that pastors should not get involved and they should just stay behind their pulpit. But the reality was that he was able to have that position because he was in a place of comfort where the British had not yet arrived.

The British arrived in New York the summer of 76. They actually drive Americans and patriots out and they begin to blame pastors. This is historically correct.

They begin to blame pastors for the trouble of the revolution in the first place. And so what happened in the summer of 1777 and their frustration with pastoral leadership causing this whole rebellion to continue, they decided to destroy all of the churches in New York City. There were 19 churches in New York City.

They burned 10 of them to the ground and they desecrate the other nine, breaking all the windows, destroying all the pews. He watched as they set his church on fire. And in that moment, he had an epiphany.

He said, I think my brother was right. Well, the reason, again, this matters is these guys stay involved. He actually moves to Pennsylvania.

And in Pennsylvania, he gets involved in Pennsylvania. But what's interesting is when you jump forward, and I'm skipping a few details that are worth noting in their story. But for the sake of brevity, when you look at the Constitution, the Constitution, after we do this in 1789, when we elect our very first Congress, we have a president.

One of the challenges for the Constitution is that they have to come up with the Bill of Rights. And what's interesting about this is when they come together to do the Bill of Rights, they say, well, we need to elect a Speaker of the House in this first Congress. And they're like, well, who's done this before? When Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg moved from New York to Pennsylvania to keep his family safe, because there was less fighting in Pennsylvania, he ran for state office in Pennsylvania.

He became a Speaker of the State Assembly in Pennsylvania. He and his brother were both elected to serve in Congress from Pennsylvania in the first Congress. So when they get together, they say, hey, has anybody been Speaker before? And he's like, I have.

And they're like, great. You are the first Speaker of the House. Here's the big deal.

If you look at the Bill of Rights to this day, there's only two signatures on the Bill of Rights. One of them, John Adams, the Vice President. The second one, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, the very first ever Speaker of the House was a pastor, by the way.

He was joined with multiple other pastors who were part of this. The reason all of this matters is because, had it not been for the leadership and influence of pastors, literally America never becomes a nation. In fact, this is why historians used to document this.

J.T. Headley, noted historian, he said, the patriotic clergy of the Revolution were the soundest statesmen of the time. The greatest leaders in that era were the pastors. The only reason America ever became a nation was because of the influence of pastors.

Now, by the way, if you want to know more about that, we have a website, wallbuilders.com. We have tons of resources, information, a lot of good stuff there also. If you even want to see more of some of this Christian heritage, if you want to see those that's there, here's where I have to finish. The reality is America never becomes a nation if it's not for the influence and impact of the church.

And where we are today, America cannot remain a nation if the church and pastors don't wake up. The only reason we're here is because there was a time when churches and pastors led. The only reason we can survive is if once again, churches and pastors lead.

God bless you guys. Wow, there's a lot to take in and process. Thank you, God, for pastors and the men and women who stood strong in the face of opposition.

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