

# Our First Freedom

When you consider the inalienable rights identified in the Declaration of Independence—gifts given to us by God—you see that “liberty” comes right after “life.” To truly understand what that liberty is and why it must again be declared and defended in our nation, we need to start with a very specific liberty—religious liberty. Why? Because it is truly our first freedom.

Do you recall the story of the Pilgrims? They hold a special place in our hearts as models for setting aside time to give thanks to God our provider and sustainer. But they also influenced the founding spirit of our nascent nation with their commitment to liberty. The Pilgrims famously arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620 after fleeing persecution for their faith in Europe. Once on this side of the Atlantic, they proceeded to establish the Mayflower Compact—a covenant made expressly before God, and which upheld religious toleration.

Wave after wave of settlers came here and embraced the Pilgrims’ desire to freely pursue faith and freedom, and this became a core element of America’s DNA. In fact, religious liberty became so foundational to the framework of our nation that it was actually incorporated as the very first freedom designated for protection in the Bill of Rights.

Now, our nation’s Founders didn’t come up with this idea on their own. It is based on ideals from the Bible. We know all people have dignity as individuals made in the image of God, and we quickly see in the early chapters of Genesis that part of that dignity includes a freedom to choose right from wrong. In the New Testament, too, we find that Jesus does not force decisions on His hearers and that gospel missions are based on persuasion, not coercion. Ultimately, robust faith requires every one of us to choose for ourselves whom we will serve.

We must focus our intercessory attention on this first freedom—to freely pursue God’s heart—for without it we are lost as a nation. May Americans never falter in cherishing the freedom to choose Christ and to worship Him freely. May we be a people of true and robust faith.

## **PRAY**

- Let’s thank God together for the spiritual seeds of thanksgiving, faith, and freedom that the Pilgrims sowed in our land.
- Pray that America would remain a beacon of light for religious liberty in our world.
- Gather with another Christian or with a group of intercessors and pray together that Americans would cherish the liberty we have to seek and honor God without government oppression. May our people turn fully to Jesus and freely choose to serve Him wholeheartedly.

Dave Kubal is the president of Intercessors for America. This is taken from the 31-day prayer guide *We Delcare*, an excellent resource for churches to pray together prior to the 2024 election.