

## “The Cost of Faithfulness”

It has been my practice this year, on the first Sunday of each month, to preach on one of the 10 Commandments in turn. And this Sunday we have the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” At the same time, on this Sunday falls the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and I would like to speak about the Declaration of Independence and patriotism. It seems to me that both the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment and patriotism have one thing in common: faithfulness. For that is what the commandment is about, isn't it, faithfulness. And that is what patriotism is about, too. And this faithfulness sometimes has a great cost. There were 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence. The first to sign was John Hancock, who wrote with large letters, so that King George could read it without his spectacles. John Carroll was another signer. When someone pointed out that “John Carroll” was such a common name that no one would know who it was, he added “of Carrollton”. In signing the Declaration, all 56 men pledged:

“For the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes—“

And here they used a foreign language: “and our sacred honor”. We don't hear much about “honor” these days, do we? And even less about the quaint notion that it might be “sacred”. But that is what they pledged, and today I want to look with you at the price some of them paid for their faithfulness. I am indebted for this to The Rev. Frederick Trumbore, in an article published in the magazine of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and to an article by the father of Rush Limbaugh. Two of the incidents they mention I can verify from other sources. I want to look with you at the price these men paid for their faithfulness, and then make one brief correction.

The 56 men who signed the Declaration pledged to one another their lives. Nine of those who signed died in the Revolutionary war, either from wounds or the hardships of war. Two men had sons who were killed. Abraham Clark of New Jersey had two sons who were officers in the Revolutionary Army. “They were captured and sent to the infamous British prison hulk afloat in New York harbor known as the hell ship ‘Jersey’ where 11,000 American captives were to die.” Their father was told if he would he would recant and come out for the King, his sons would be released. His answer: “No.” (Rush H. Limbaugh)