Foundation Forward

Caesar Rodney

By David Streater, Ph.D.
Burke County

This is an American history educational moment of those who made a difference during the Revolutionary War era and how they served our Country.

An admirable and unique individual, Caesar Rodney helped make the United States the influential nation it became. Born on October 7, 1728, in Jones Neck, Delaware, Caesar was the son of Caesar Rodney, Sr., and Elizabeth. His parents ensured he was well educated at home, the Latin School in Philadelphia, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Rodney's beliefs in an independent America shone through during the Second Continental Congress. Delegates were considering a motion for independence. During the debate, some opposed each other; some switched their vote, while others were solidly opposed. Finally, Edward Rutledge of South Carolina directed this vote to be delayed by one day. The postponement was because Rodney, a formidable advocate for freedom, was called away to quell a British insurrection in his home state of Delaware.

An urgent communication was delivered to Rodney in Delaware. The message told him of the dire predicament in Philadelphia: his 'yea' vote was critical to pass the motion for autonomy. On July 2, 1776 (a Tuesday), just before the day's close of business for the Congress, Rodney made a spectacular entrance: "Almost unimaginably, he had ridden 80 miles through the night, changing horses several times [in a torrential rainstorm] to be there in time to cast his independence vote." Soaking wet, exhausted, and covered with mud, Caesar accomplished this feat despite lifelong physical defects and combating facial cancer. Rodney was tall and slim, with a small head, and sporting a scarf to cover his face to conceal the malady he was fighting.

Caesar led a responsible life from a young age when his father died. Among other activities, he managed the family farm and was a high sheriff, judge, member of the Stamp Act Congress, and the First and Second Congresses. Battling ill health, Rodney still became a major general in the militia and signed the Declaration of Independence on August 2, 1776.

Rodney was a visionary who was determined to see the colonies achieve nationhood and accomplished many notable acts under challenging circumstances. In his later years, Caesar supported the abolitionist movement and helped lay the groundwork for social advances. Buildings, schools, and even marathons are named in his honor. Caesar Rodney was an altruistic Founding Father who served America honorably, establishing We the People.

Please visit your Charters of Freedom setting in most western North Carolina counties. A Charters of Freedom setting consists of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. They are on permanent display analogous to the Charters of Freedom in the National Archives, Washington, DC. Please visit FoundationForward.com to learn more about our existing settings. Vance and Mary Jo Patterson are the benefactors and originators of Foundation Forward, 501(c)(3) education non-profit.

Teachers are encouraged to contact Dr. Streater for information and complementary student education materials to enhance experiential field trips to a Charter of Freedom settings. In addition, everyone is welcome and urged to obtain a personalized engraved legacy paver for placement at their local Charters of Freedom setting. Please contact Dr. Streater (david.streater@mymail.barry.edu) for engraved legacy paver information and complementary educational materials.

Dr. David Streater is the director of education for Foundation Forward. He is a retired college instructor and administrator, and a retired probation and parole officer/administrator. David is a criminologist who has an acute history interest, served in the Navy, and is a resident of Burke County, NC.

Plumtree Church

Saved by Grace - Chapter 1

By Ryan Bridego
Avery County

Do you know who Kate Middleton is? She married Prince William, whose father is Prince Charles and whose mother was Princess Diana. Prince William is second in line to the throne of Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Kate didn't grow up with a lot of money. She didn't come from Royal blood. Her parents were both flight attendants for British Airways. She is the first commoner to marry into the British Royal Family in over 350 years. When she arrived at Westminster Abbey on April 29th, 2011, she arrived in a car with her father. When she left the wedding ceremony, she left in a golden carriage with her husband, she was now a princess of the Royal Family.

This wedding was very expensive. Traditionally the parents of the bride pay for the wedding. This was not possible for Kate and her family. Kate's gold wedding band was $11,000. Her two wedding cakes were $80,000. Kate's dress cost $434,000. The reception, with its 600 guests cost $600,000. Their flowers were $800,000, and their security for the event cost $32,000,000. Kate Middleton is now rich beyond her wildest dreams. All the blessings of the Royal Family that William was entitled to through birth, she now receives through marriage.

This beautiful love story is very similar to the beautiful love story of Father God toward us. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*" Salvation is the gift of God. It is not of yourself. It is not something that can be earned. It is a gift to be received by faith. Romans 4:4-5 (NIV) says, "*Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.*"

Again, our salvation is a gift, not an obligation that God has to give us as a reward for our hard work or obedience. This mindset of earning has carried over into the church. People believe that they deserve to be blessed based on their works, their years of service, or their own merit and track record. They think they can earn the Lord's favor; they can earn answered prayer, or they can earn their healing and it just doesn't work that way. That is not how the Kingdom of God works.

Luke 17:7-10 says, "*And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'*"

This story has always bothered me because I didn't understand what God was saying through this parable. The servant worked in the field all day long. When he finished work and returned to his master's house, he was instructed to make supper for everyone. He did all this work and didn't receive a simple thank you. That is hard to comprehend. This led me to study this more. I just knew there had to be more to this story.

Luke 17:10 in the Weymouth translation says, "*So you also when you have obeyed all the orders given you, must say, "'There is no merit in our service: what we have done is only what we were in duty bound to do.'*" This tells us there is no merit in our service to God.

Webster's dictionary defines merit as - character or conducts deserving reward, honor, or esteem. A spiritual credit is held to be earned by the performance of righteous acts and to ensure future benefits.

There is no merit to our service. We don't earn rewards, honor, esteem, or spiritual credits for our performance. Whether you have done nothing like the man who buried his one talent, or you have obeyed everything like the servant in Luke 17:10, you are still an unprofitable servant. God doesn't owe you anything. You don't deserve anything. You haven't earned His favor, merit, rewards, or anything else. We don't achieve merit, favor, grace, or blessings by what we do. We inherit His favor, grace, and blessings because of what Jesus did for us. This is the recipe for humility and grace. However, thinking we have earned something, or we deserve something is the recipe for bondage and legalism.

The good news of the gospel is that salvation has been provided for us by the power of God; we access this salvation through faith in what Jesus did for us. It is a gift from God we receive by faith, not a work we can achieve by earning.

Kate didn't have to work to be good enough to be a part of the Royal Family. She was loved by a member of the Royal Family and received all the blessings and benefits through their marriage. Kate now has access to every room in the palace. She now has access to the Royal treasury and can wear whatever jewelry she wants. She now even has access to the presence of the Queen. All these things are available to her because of her marriage relationship.

In the same way, because we are loved by the Royal Family of God, we now have access to this great salvation. It is not based on being good enough or working hard enough, it is based on faith in what He provided for us.

Romans 5:1-2 "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" Praise God we are saved by faith in the grace that Jesus provided for us.

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