

*The 250th Anniversary of Col.
Leslie's Retreat in Salem*
February 26, 1775



“Blessed Are the Peacemakers”

Dr. Paul Jehle as Rev. Thomas Barnard, Jr.

**The New Testament Church
February 26, 2025**

*The 250th Anniversary of Col. Leslie's Retreat in Salem:
"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"*
February 26, 1775 - 2025

PP 1

A first-person monologue...
Pastor Paul Jehle as Rev. Thomas Barnard, Jr.

PP 2

Introduction

- This is a monologue, where I intend to tell Thomas Barnard, Jr.'s story...
- It will cover elements in his life up to and just beyond February 26, 1775...
- There are few, if any, biographies on his life, so I have endeavored to study his life in the context of the times in which he lived and his family legacy, it is my rendition and opinion based on as much historic evidence as I could find to date
- This manuscript is footnoted with sources for future reference to any interested.

PP 3

- John Adams made it clear, that the American revolution did not begin when shots were fired, and was not primarily caused by pragmatic issues of economics or imperial forces of tyranny – but began *in the hearts and minds of the American people*, specifically it was a *change in their Religious Sentiments of their Duties and Obligations.*¹

PP 4

- The vehicle used to plant these seeds of religious change was the Word of God taught by the clergy throughout the colonies, regardless of what initial side we may have been on.² Thus, more than we knew at the time, *the theology of the pulpit was the major cause of political change, for the heart is always the source, and cultural change the effect.*

PP 5

Monologue as Thomas Barnard, Jr.

- It is amazing how a town can providentially live up to its name... Salem
- Rev. Francis Higginson, in the year 1629, was having his devotions from Psalm 76, and when he read verse 2 – *In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His*

¹ From John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, 13 February 1818

² Hoffer, Peter Charles, *Prelude to Revolution: the Salem Gunpowder Raid of 1775*, John Hopkins University Press, 2013, p. 2.

dwelling place in Zion, he suggested that the village of Naumkeag (a native word meaning “comfort and haven”) be re-named Salem (for peace).³ It stuck...

- Our original church covenant, August 6, 1629 put forth during a day of fasting and prayer when we were joined by a delegation from the church at Plimoth was this; *We covenant with the Lord and one with another, and do bind ourselves together in the presence of God, to walk together in all His ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us, in his Blessed word of truth.*⁴ We elected our teacher and pastor by popular vote, inspired by our brethren from Plimoth.

PP 6

- Reverend John White of Dorchester, England, the “father of Massachusetts” wrote of his vision to plant a colony in these parts
- *"It will be a service unto the Church, of great consequence, to carry the Gospel into those parts of the world, and raise a bulwark against the kingdom of antichrist..."*⁵
- He contrasted the methods of the Jesuits to plant religious colonies by the sword of the flesh – force - rather than by the sword of the Spirit – consent. Looking back, the devil didn’t forget that proclamation...
- White also wrote the Charter for Massachusetts Bay in 1629, declared our main mission to be an example of living like Christ; bringing others to Him. *Whereby our said People... religiously, peaceably, and civilly governed, as their good life and conversation may win and incite the Natives of the Country, to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of Mankind, and the Christian Faith, which is... the principal end of this Plantation.*⁶

PP 7

- John White had sent a good Christian man, Roger Conant, a “*pious, sober and prudent gentleman*”⁷ to settle here in 1626... he had come to Plymouth in 1623, and left peacefully a year later for Salem... but trouble here soon began...
- Pastor Lyford, if you can call him that, and his co-conspirator Lyford, who caused all kinds of problems in Plymouth, came here and caused more after having been excommunicated from there. They destroyed the Pilgrim fishing station, and Plymouth sent Myles Standish... tension mounted...

³ Jehle, Paul, *Salem: Town of Peace*, Proclaim Liberty Journal, Vol. 1, Issue 4, Heritage Institute Ministries, 1990, p. 6,11

⁴ Barz-Snell, Rev. Jeffrey, *A Short History of the First Church in Salem*, p. 1

⁵ White, John, *Reasons for the Plantation in New England*, 1628 – see [Reasons for the Plantation In New England](#).

⁶ See [The Avalon Project : The Charter of Massachusetts Bay : 1629](#)

⁷ Jehle, pgs. 4-7.

- Roger Conant intervened, brought peace between the two factions, with justice, and was willing, to *the hazard of his life*, to remain here, and thus Salem's roots were already laid before its name was changed – *a town of peace!*⁸

PP 8

- The son of teacher Francis Higginson (who gave Salem its name,) was Rev. John Higginson, whose ministry as pastor spanned from 1660 to 1708! He kept amazing records, so that the first 31 years of our church could be preserved!⁹
- He also reminded us, in 1663, that *New-England is originally a plantation of Religion, not a plantation of Trade.*¹⁰ Not that he was negating the need for profit, but simply that we could not be bought for the love of money, for we were established based on our love for and honor of, the God of Scripture.

PP 9

- He also faced that awful delusion called the “witch trials” in 1692. Our spiritual enemy desired to erase our destiny of peace, with 138 being accused and jailed, and twenty being put to death, all unlawfully I might add. Half of those who died were believers in Christ, some prayer intercessors like Rebecca Nurse.
- The trials introduced the injustice of being guilty until proven innocent, and the acceptance of spectral evidence – dreams, visions, and strange superstitions borrowed from paganism in Europe, to determine if someone was a witch!¹¹ Though John took no part in the trials, he didn't do enough to stop them either.

PP 10

- The prayer and fast day called by the General Court for the errors of the witch trials began a healing – especially after Judge Sewall's public repentance, and truly after Ann Putnam, Jr., in the year 1706, at 26 years of age, repented of her deeds 14 years previously, and was forgiven by the church of her false accusations of 62 people, 17 of whom were executed!¹² That was a miracle!
- Soon after the repentance the fires of revival known as the Great Awakening began to burn up the “wood, hay and stubble”¹³ of our village so that we might serve Christ purely once again. In learning about this time from my ancestors, it

⁸ Jehle, p. 5.

⁹ Barz-Snell, p. 2.

¹⁰ Higginson, Rev. John, *The cause of God and his people in New-England, as it was stated and discussed in a sermon preached before the Honourable General Court of the Massachusetts colony, on the 27 day of May 1663. Being the day of election at Boston.* Cambridge: Samuel Green, 1663, pp. 10-11.

¹¹ See Jehle, Paul, *Spiritual War: The Salem Witch Trials of 1692*, Proclaim Liberty Journal, Volume 3, Issues 3-4, Heritage Institute Ministries, 1992, pages 30-32.

¹² *Ibid.*, pages 41-42.

¹³ See 1st Corinthians 3:12-13 where wood, hay and stubble are symbolic of the effects of sin, “burned up” by the Holy Spirit's work in cooperation with the repentance for such sin in an individual's life.

put within me a conviction that *we must fight every spiritual war with God's methods, not fleshly ones!*

PP 11

- It was during this time of awakening that I was born, February 5, 1748. I heard of how George Whitefield preached in Salem in 1740, and the wonderful results that followed. **I learned early in life that the key to revival is true repentance and humble surrender to Christ as Lord – all done by a work of God's grace.**
- I remember hearing stories of my great grandfather, Pastor Thomas Barnard, a classmate of the amazing Cotton Mather at Harvard. I heard of his regret that he did not do more to stop the witch trials. His second son, John, succeeded my great grandfather as minister of North Parish.
- My father, Thomas, born in 1716, continued the legacy of Pastor of North Parish. Growing up with my father's passion, I saw firsthand how he would spend hours studying to produce a two-hour sermon on Sunday morning, and another one in the afternoon as well as town lectures on current events, and preaching election sermons to candidates, and artillery sermons for the militia.

PP 12

- On one such occasion, in 1758, when I was ten, he stated that it was God's design to bring God's *throne, established in the heavens... the parts of which shall gradually take place, improving in or tending toward perfection, 'till the Consummation of all Things.*¹⁴ My father always pointed toward **the victory of Christ's kingdom.**
- But he went on to say that *when a community in general, forsakes God and virtue, they fall into those errors and sins, which either draw them the just resentments of their neighbors or invite some hardy invader to attack them.*¹⁵ **I thus learned that if the church forsakes God, the town and nation suffer the consequences.**

PP 13

- This is precisely why one must be a *religious soldier, inspired to diligence in accomplishing himself in the Art of War, not by the Hope of a plume of feathers... but that he may be an instrument in the Hand of God, of breaking the teeth of the oppressor.*¹⁶ **I learned that force is justified when done as a last resort in defense the rights of conscience.**

PP 14

¹⁴ Barnard, Thomas, *A sermon preached to the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in Boston, New England, June 5, 1758. Being the anniversary of their election of officers*, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, p. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13

- He concluded his sermon that day by saying that *Jesus the Mediator who is higher than the kings of the Earth, sits enthroned on the right Hand of God, there exerting his exalted Power, in subduing his and our Enemies, by the Sword of the Spirit the Word of Truth... promoting the inward disposition of Love and Peace, which establishes these blessings in a better foundation than terror or policy.*¹⁷ **I learned that a motive of love and peace establish His blessings better than terror of force or political policy alone.**

PP 15

- In his 1763 election sermon, when I was 15, echoing 2nd Timothy 2, my father said that *tranquility and order are not the effects of chance.... For wise rulers... will enter their offices with great sobriety of mind... they shall need the steadiest application, unwearied efforts to approve themselves to Him, by whom the welfare of the People is entrusted to them.*¹⁸ **I learned that a wise magistrate is one that administers the rule of law.**

PP 16

- In two years, the Stamp Act was given on the Colonies, directly taxing us in violation of our written charter by Parliament instead of our own Assemblies. This was hardly the work of a good or wise magistrate. In Salem, our own town Assembly wrote formally with measured words, declaring it “burdensome.”¹⁹

PP 17

- I was now 17, but recognized, with my father’s help, how **spiritual awakening naturally leads to civil awakening.** But the Declaratory Acts of 1766 of Parliamentary “right” in all cases, and the Townshend Acts of 1767 made things worse, and some protested in the streets.
- The Stamp Act Congress issued formal appeals from lawful interposition. But the repeal of the Townshend Acts met with resistance since Britain was declaring the right to tax in violation of the charter. But we were Loyalists, desiring a peaceful resolution, and the King was thousands of miles away.

PP 18

- In 1768, when I was 20, my father’s lecture at Harvard impressed me greatly. In fact, it put conviction in my soul, that would last a lifetime. His title was this, *The power of God, the proof of Christianity.* How? Because our faith has as its foundation, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. In other words, we must do things God’s way and His **power will be seen in His providential intervention!**

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁸ Barnard, Thomas, *A Sermon preached before His Excellency Francis Bernard, Esq., Governor and Commander in Chief, the Honorable His Majesty’s Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives, May 25, 1763*, University of Chicago Library Digital Collections, pgs. 30-31.

¹⁹ Hoffman, p. 15.

- He concluded by saying, *let us aim at a just apprehension of the nature and evidence of Christianity, that it may lie clearly in our minds, that we may be able to defend it successfully against gain-sayers; and that it may become the power of God unto salvation to us. Let us therefore apply to serious consideration and search the Scriptures; especially deliberately study the gospel of Christ; and to all our endeavor add constant prayers to the Father of lights, to enlighten and direct us, that we may be made wise unto salvation.*²⁰ **I learned that it is the power of God, through prayer, that changes hearts!**

PP 19

- I signed the 1768 address to Gage hoping for “deference rather than submission” and later noting that in Salem we worked and hoped for peace.²¹
- Still, the presence of British soldiers on streets, camped on Boston Common, or occasionally quartering in homes, concerned us greatly. I was glad they were not here in Salem.

PP 20

- When the Boston Massacre occurred in March of 1770, I was so relieved, as my father was, that John Adams and Josiah Quincy defended the British soldiers, acquitting all but two of murder. Though controversial, it was important to be warned that if passion alone would be our course, God would be our adversary, for we must embrace the principles of the rule of law.

PP 21

- Then, in the Spring of 1770, when I was 22, my father suddenly became paralyzed and was unable to preach, teach or minister. As a dutiful son in training, I stepped in and fulfilled his duties until the church’s annual meeting. At that meeting, the congregants were split as to who they might choose to be minister – myself, or Rev. Asa Dunbar.²²
- As can be the case at such meetings, after long discussion, the differences could not be resolved, and thus, we decided to form two churches peacefully. The First Church chose Rev. Dunbar, and the new North Church in Salem selected me as its first minister. We didn’t even have a building yet.

PP 22

- In May of 1772, 52 members, most of them loyalists, were commissioned to build a new Meetinghouse by August of 1772.²³ This Meetinghouse stood on

²⁰ Barnard, Thomas, *The Power of God, the Proof of Christianity. A discourse delivered at the Dudleian lecture, in the chapel of Harvard College, Cambridge, N.E. May 11th, 1768.* University of Chicago Library Digital Collections, pgs. 6,27

²¹ Hoffer, pages 22-23.

²² Salem, Massachusetts, North Church records, 1772-1831., Congregational Library and Archives, see [Browse the North Church records in Salem, Massachusetts - Digital Collections | Congregational Library & Archives.](#)

²³ *Ibid.*

the corner of Lynde and North Street, just south of the North River and the long 300-foot bridge with a draw in the middle to let certain ships pass.

- My first two years of pastoring a new congregation in my mid-20's was during some of the most intense times our town faced in its history, especially in relation to our mother country.

PP 23

- The orations at the Old South Church each commemorating the Boston Massacre kept the flame of liberty alive in the face of injustice, with men like Joseph Warren, who attended Pastor Samuel Cooper's Brattles Church, articulating the notion that soon we might have to take a stand against the Prerogative of the King. These writings caused me to seriously ponder.

PP 24

- Then, in 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place where chests of tea were opened, dumped into Boston Harbor because of a boycott of goods unjustly taxed.
- It was done with little tumult, unanimously voted on by the city council, and followed legal precedent of protecting the owner and goods for 20 days, working to have the shipment returned, and then protesting with a public display now that the product was "liable for seizure." They couldn't steal any, and they had to destroy it all if they were going to follow a lawful boycott.²⁴

PP 25

- The number of members of my church desiring to resist the Crown was steadily increasing, though most churches, like my own, had many loyalists in them as well. I kept preaching the gospel, emphasizing that **it is the power of God and by His grace it will produce godly action, for** *"if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."*²⁵
- As a result of the Tea Party, the Crown punished Boston and prepared to shut down its Harbor on June 1 of 1774. A **day of prayer and fasting** was called in the Colony, and oh how I prayed that peace could be maintained, knowing that resistance by force, as my father had taught me, was the Scripture's last resort.

PP 26

- On June 2, 1774, Thomas Gage moved the Provincial Capital to Salem! Now the British were coming to my backyard! He came triumphantly into our small town, and *"was greeted by dueling addresses signed by 48 of Salem's Royalists and 125 of the Whigs. The addresses exhibit contrasting political ideologies... On one hand, Royalists supported a polity that promoted order, stability, and*

²⁴ Jehle, Paul, *The Boston Tea Party*, Plymouth Rock Foundation E-News, December, 2017 – www.plymrock.org.

²⁵ Romans 12:18.

the rule of law... on the other hand, Whigs demanded a government that protected people's rights, especially their property rights."²⁶

- Though the emphasize of each group was different, we were all taught virtually the same theology, and I had a duty to shepherd both factions by emphasizing loyalty to the gospel, though the number of partiers was greatly increasing!
- But how was I to do this? The older ones were the conservatives who wanted things as they had been, loyal to the Crown. They rejoiced to see General Gage here, for he would keep order. However, a rising number of the youth demanded their rights and protection of their property, becoming patriots.
- I must admit, the more I witnessed the way Gen. Gage enjoyed his pomp and pride, he "mistook ceremony for sincerity."²⁷ **My politics was catching up to my theology**, and I was certainly drawn closer and closer to the younger crowd, for I was only 26 years old myself!

PP 27

- In a way, it was providential that we saw, here in Salem, the pride of royalty, and yet, I attempted to maintain a calm and peaceful demeanor.
- Several of our town leaders and influential individuals got to know General Gage well, and this allowed us to get along for a while. Since the capital was now Salem, when the General Court met in our Town House, John Hancock and Samuel Adams brought proposals from the Boston Committee of Correspondence to call for a Continental Congress.
- When Gage heard about it, he shut down the assembly and all town meetings except for the annual one. He attempted to thwart small gatherings of people to stop popular communication on liberty, but they happened all the more.

PP 28

- A member of church, David Mason, had purchased 19 French canons and had Captain Robert Foster, blacksmith here in town, begin mounting them on carriages for land use. They were secretly held in Foster's shop on the north side of the North River.²⁸
- Mason was about 49 years old, a member of the Committee of Safety, who previously had overseen preventing any tea from being received in Salem, and

²⁶ Morris, Richard J., *General Gage Comes to Salem - Project MUSE - General Gage Comes to Salem: Interests, Ideologies, Identities, and Family Alliances Collide on the Eve of the American Revolution*, p. 1.

²⁷ Hoffer, p. 24.

²⁸ *Leslie's Retreat, or How the Revolutionary War Almost Began in Salem, February 26, 1775 - Leslie's Retreat, or How the Revolutionary War Almost Began in Salem, February 26, 1775 - Historic Ipswich*, p. 1.

was asked “*to make private preparation for the Revolution*” by “*collecting stores for the use of the country.*”²⁹

- Though official town meetings were now forbidden by Gage, except for the annual one, they were happening everywhere every week. In July he brought up Col. Leslie and the 64th regiment, all the while not realizing how out of touch he was with the rising tide against British tyranny.

PP 29

- On August 24 Gage threatened to arrest the members of the Committee of Correspondence, and over 3,000 people from Salem and surrounding towns arrived, ready to rescue any who would be arrested!³⁰
- Gage realized he was no longer welcome in Salem, and I realized that the number of citizens who believed their rights were being violated were more numerous and deeply united that I could have dreamed!
- I recognized that the inhabitants of Marblehead had been meeting for months, willing to pay the price of both employment (on the sea with the protection of Her Majesty’s navy), and life (rather to die than submit to the Crown), joined what had become known as the ‘*Grand Union for the Salvation of American Liberty*’ was a movement that appeared unstoppable.³¹
- Gage seized powder in Somerville in the fall of 1774, and that caused many to resist even more. The British seizure of powder in Williamsburg did the same. In reflecting on Salem’s history, a town sponsored militia, begun here in 1637, was a part of our history, traced all the way back from the right to bear arms given to ancient Israel. It was part of the **lower magistrate principle of lawful interposition.**

PP 30

- It was a cold day on Sunday morning, February 26, 1775. We didn’t know it when we met for our morning service, that 250 British soldiers, sent by Gen. Gage, the 64th regiment under command of Col. Leslie, arrived at midnight in Marblehead, were hidden below deck, and came ashore when church began!
- If the British had designed to be secretive about such a move, waiting to begin their march once the town of Marblehead was in church, they were sorely mistaken. All were on alert and knew the plan of Gage to seize canon and powder, for it had been forbidden for us to import it.

²⁹ Bell, R. L. - *Boston 1775: Talk about David Mason in Salem*, 28 Apr.

³⁰ See *The Year 3,000 People Came to Town Meeting in Salem* - New England Historical Society.

³¹ Endicott, Charles, *Leslie’s Retreat at the North Bridge in Salem on Sunday, February 26, 1775*, p. 18.

- The church in Marblehead was alerted by a drummer boy, and Major John Pedrick, a friend of Leslie, who he thought was still a Tory, rode out from Marblehead to alert us in Salem.
- The 64th “*march(ed) in double quick time in the direction of Salem, their music playing "Yankee Doodle" ' by way of derision.*”³² He even passed Leslie on horseback as he and his soldiers were repairing the bridge that had been pulled apart to inhibit him!
- It is interesting to note that Pedrick’s daughter was being pursued by Major McGrath of the British. Pedrick’s three daughters had converted him from a Tory to a Patriot, and to stop the advances of this soldier, after berating the colonial militia, she said “*When you draw your sword against my countrymen, I hope it is the last day of your life!*”³³ She hoped this would stop her advance!
- Pedrick came to Mason’s home, and with a selectman, discussed plans, and Mason then interrupted our afternoon service, shouting “*the regulars are coming and are now near Maloon’s Mills!*”³⁴ and the drums began to beat... and the meetinghouse emptied into the streets. This was the moment I had dreaded, but was now upon us all!
- The East Church, at the corner of Main Street (later Essex) and Hardy Lane, was alerted, and its patriot pastor, James Diman “blessed his congregation” and left to defend the town. Antipas Stewart, schoolmaster at St. Peter’s Church, Anglican, stopped his lesson and joined those in the streets.³⁵

PP 32

- Mason quickly rode his horse across the bridge to where his treasures of canon were stored, and local farmers helped transport them to safety or hiding.
- The regiment marched right past our empty Meetinghouse on Lynde street, and then turned right to cross the bridge, but stopped.
- Mason quickly returned across the bridge to observe Leslie discussing his plans with Sargeant, a tory lawyer, and Brown, his disgraced half-brother. They had been seen waving white handkerchiefs on top of their houses to lead the troops in the direction of where to find the canon and were despised by the people.³⁶

³² Endicott, Charles, *Leslie’s Retreat at the North Bridge in Salem on Sunday, February 26, 1775*, p. 18.

³³ Jehle, Paul, *Leslie’s Retreat at the North Bridge in Salem*, Plymouth Rock Foundation E-News, February, 2016.

³⁴ Endicott, p. 19.

³⁵ Hoffer, p. 71.

³⁶ Endicott, p. 21-22.

- Seeing the troops with “*lanterns, hatchets, pickaxes, spades, handspikes and coils of rope*” with which to spike canon and make them inoperable, Mason quickly returned across the bridge again to make sure they were unsuccessful.

PP 32

- Captain John Felt, about 52, a former ship captain whose “*frame, square, strong and muscular, denoted him a man whom it would be the part of prudence to avoid in single combat,*”³⁷ stayed right next to Col. Leslie the whole time of the incident, saying nothing, for which I was very glad.
- In addition to his physical presence, it was “*His love of independence and hatred of tyranny (that) had shone through his whole life, and with these qualities was blended the most intrepid resolution.*”³⁸ As a pastor, this heart and character was indeed a blessing to me.
- As I made my way toward the conference in the street with one of my parishioners, Jonathan Gavett, my closest friend, I noticed that Col. Timothy Pickering, at 21 years of age, only two weeks the head of our town militia, was already there. Col. Pickering had a pacific temper and like me, hoped for peace instead of war.
- Jonathan had known many of those soldiers previously stationed in these parts, and was looking at their faces to see if he could recognize any of them. They, however, were scowling, jostling him and being quite disrespectful. In those times, I was so thankful for Christians who know how to handle such insults with a pacific demeanor of self-control – such as Col. Pickering.
- Those who gathered across the bridge were unarmed, for there were only about five of those on the patriot sides with any weapons at all. I could see this would be a test of will, patience, and character and I prayed silently for wisdom, especially when I saw that the draw bridge in the middle had been raised.
- Sargeant, the Tory lawyer was heard saying, “*it is all over with them.*” Others had crawled up on the leaf of the bridge on the other side and were peering over the top, watching the scene.
- Leslie, outraged, demanded that the bridge be lowered. He was asked, why do you want to cross the bridge? He replied, “*I have my orders to cross and will do so if it costs me my life and all the lives of my men.*”

PP 33

³⁷ Endicott, Charles, "Leslie's Retreat or the Resistance to British Arms at the North Bridge in Salem on Sunday, PM, February 18, 1775." Proceedings of the Essex Institute, January 18, 1855.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

- He then went to the side to confer with his officers, and was heard by Felt to say, “*you must face about this division, and fire upon those people.*”
- When Felt heard this, he shouted “*fire! You had better not fire! You have no right to fire without further orders! If you do fire, you will all be dead men!*”³⁹
- After saying these words, and seeing Col. Leslie hesitate, recognizing that he would be firing on an unarmed, peaceful group, it instantly caused all the patriots in the road, on the bridge and raised leaf, to have fortified determination to withstand this assault on their liberties. I thanked God that peace prevailed during this tense, at least so far.

PP 34

- In any kind of tense altercation such as this, there are always those who cannot control themselves – especially with their tongue. Some one peering over from the raised leaf declared, “*Soldiers, red jackets, lobster coats, cowards...*” to which a soldier yelled “*if they don’t stop jeering, we should fire*” and the individual responded, “*fire then!*”⁴⁰
- It was a cold afternoon and late. Many of the soldiers, having disembarked after midnight, walked more than five miles, and were standing still now in the cold, began shaking violently, unable to restrain themselves. Someone mocked, “*I should think you were all fiddlers, you shake so!*”

PP 35

- The British and the patriots near the raised bridge, noticed three gundalow flat bottom boats lying by the low tide of the river, and the British were ordered to commandeer them to by-pass the raised drawbridge. At the same, the owners of the boats helped to *scuttle them* or break their bottoms so they were useless.
- A scuffle broke out in one of the boats in which Joseph Wicher was working, and he opened his shirt to expose his breast, and he was pricked with the tip of a bayonet, drawing blood. For the rest of his life, he was proud of this wound – for it marked the first blood shed in the battle for America’s liberty.

PP 36

- After consulting with his officers, Leslie approached the bridge one more time and said, “*I am determined to cross this bridge before I return to Boston, even I stay here to Autumn!*” He then said he would turn the stores near the bridge into barracks, to which Felt replied, “*no one would care about that.*” Leslie then remarked to Felt, “*By God I will not be defeated!*” Felt replied, “*you must acknowledge that you have already been baffled.*”⁴¹

³⁹ Endicott, p. 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

PP 37

- It was at this point that I realized there must be a peaceful resolution or blood would be shed, for both sides were getting out of control. I approached Col. Leslie and said, *“I desire you will not fire upon these innocent people. Pray restrain your troops from pushing with their bayonets.”* Leslie asked, *“who are you, Sir?”* I responded, *“I am Thomas Barnard, a minister of the Gospel, and my mission is peace.*
- *You cannot commit this violation against innocent men, here, on this holy day, without sinning against God and humanity. The blood of every murdered man will cry from the ground for vengeance upon yourself, and the Nation which you represent. Let me entreat you to return.”*⁴²

PP 38

- Col. Leslie then said his troops were being insulted, and demanded again that the draw be lowered, saying he was on the King’s highway, and was determined to cross to the other side.
- Old James Barr, replied *“it is not the King's highway, it is a road built by the owners of the lots on the other side, and no king, country or town has any control over it.”* Leslie remarked, *“there may be two sides to that”* to which Barr replied, *“I think it will be the best way for you to conclude the King has nothing to do with it.”*⁴³

PP 39

- At this time, Felt, Pickering, in communication with Mason on the other side of the raised drawbridge at the top of the leaf, and I proposed a compromise – to allow Leslie to pass over the bridge and fulfill his orders, no further than thirty rods (500 feet), about face, and return to Boston.
- I thought this was reasonable, since the British wanted to keep their pride and safe face, and we wanted to keep our principles and stand for liberty. Mason got those on the other side to agree as well. They stood on a line drawn on the other side and Col. Leslie, marched across the bridge, about faced, and kept his honor.

PP 40

- As the British marched through the town departing, they played *“the world’s turned upside down.”* Nurse Sarah Tarrant, yelled at the troops through an open window, *“Go home and tell your master he has sent you on a fool's errand, and broken the peace of our Sabbath, — what! do you think we were born in the woods to be frightened by owls?”* A soldier pointed his musket as if to fire at her – and she said, *“fire if you have the courage, but I doubt it.”*⁴⁴

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pages 79-30.

PP 41

- It was a somber moment to have me watch, close to my Meetinghouse, the draw bridge lowered, the British pass over, about face, and return the way they had come. I was only 27, and yet I knew that I had been prepared for such a time as this – bringing together the theology of lawful resistance to tyranny, yet with a priority to do all in our power to procure peace as Jesus taught – *blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*⁴⁵
- All of us just stood in the road in awe of the fact that we averted certain devastation and had escaped it by the grace of God. I gathered those on the streets and said to them, “*this is an appropriate time for prayer,*” and I did so;
- *Oh Lord, God, Sovereign of our Nation and our lives, we thank you for this peaceful resolution, and that no lives were lost here today. Thank you that we were able to preserve our rights and principles, and Col. Leslie fulfill his orders from General Gage, saving face and his pride. Help us, now, to be more obedient to you, and to use force only when it is dutiful for us to do so. In Christ’s name, Amen.*⁴⁶

PP 42

- Capt. Felt and I followed the brigade after prayer as they left Salem, making sure no one deviated from the agreement on either side. Leslie asked Felt why he stayed so close to him the entire time, and he evidently told him if he did give orders to fire, he was going to pick him up and throw him into the river!⁴⁷
- Militias that had been alerted as soon as the British arrived, now began to appear from surrounding towns. I pondered the fact that the **actions of tyranny convince more people of danger than those who merely speak it as probable.** God used this peaceful withdrawal to boost confidence. God uses the presence of evil to unite His people, and when we “overcome evil with good” it inspires many to stand for righteousness, as it did in my own church.

PP 43

The Legacy of Salem’s Peaceful Resistance to Imperial Power

- Of Thomas Barnard, Jr., William Cowper’s poem recounted his legacy:
 - o “*There stands the messenger of truth; there stands the legate of the skies!
Whose heart is warm, whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose
life coincident, exhibit lucid proofs, that he is honest in a sacred cause.*”⁴⁸

PP 44

⁴⁵ Matthew 5:13.

⁴⁶ Note: there is no record of Barnard’s actual prayer, this was drawn from conjecture based on prayers at the time.

⁴⁷ Hoffman, p. 83.

⁴⁸ Endicott, p. 23.

- The *Gentleman's Magazine* proved visionary when it went to print on April 29, 1775: “*The Americans have hoisted their standard of liberty at Salem, there is no doubt that the next news will be an account of a bloody engagement between the two armies*”⁴⁹ This was written without the knowledge that the battles of Lexington and Concord taking place a week before!

PP 45

- As historian Peter Hoffer wrote, “*the first incidence of the gathering of a republican citizenry asserting the right of self-government of their own land and the unforced recession of British might came in Salem, on Sunday, February 26, 1775.*”⁵⁰

PP 46

- News reached London of the fiasco at Salem in a little over a month. Edmund Burke told Parliament: “*Thus ended their first expedition, without effect and happily without mischief. Enough appeared to show on what a slender thread the peace of the Empire hung, and that the least exertion of military power would certainly bring things to extremities.*”

PP 47

- Due to Pastor Barnard’s attitude and emphasis, he was respected by both sides of the political spectrum – Loyalist and Patriot. As a result, with both sides in the street, he was respected enough to bring a negotiation of peace at the time it was needed the most. Also, both sides had heard sound theology, and Barnard was able to avoid a spirit of vengeance, so God was not the adversary.
- If war had broken out in Salem, Massachusetts would not have been ready. Salem helped solidify the unity necessary “to allow the people’s politics to be brought up to their theology.” In six weeks, Lexington came, the minutemen were more prepared, communications clear, and British movements monitored.

PP 49

- Thomas Barnard, Jr. never imagined he would be called from obscurity to be the first to face such a dilemma on a Sunday – but he was followed by Jonas Clark of Lexington, William Emerson of Concord, and Samuel Cooper of Boston.
- Today, the “black-robed regiment” has received more understanding, and that is good. But we must recognize that need to balance the shepherding of those from various factions to **let actions follow our convictions, but not lead them.**

⁴⁹ Hoffer, pages 2-3.

⁵⁰ Hoffer, page 3.