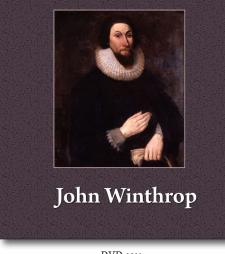


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A Model of **Christian Charity**



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A Model of Christian Charity

John Winthrop (1587 – 1649)

Read by:	A Founder's Keeper	Language:	English
Length:	42 minutes	Style:	Solo
Genre(s):	Religion, Political Science		

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Political commentators often refer to an image of a shining "city on a hill" as a metaphor for the American experiment. Ronald Reagan used it in his Election Eve address in 1980 and again in his farewell address in 1989. The phrase originates in the parable of Salt and Light in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14. Its significance in the American political context refers to a passage in "A Model of Christian Charity", a sermon by Puritan leader John Winthrop given at Holyrood Church in Southampton to his first group of Massachusetts Bay colonists just prior to embarking on the ship Arabella to cross the Atlantic to settle Boston. Winthrop warned that their new community would be "as a city on upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us", meaning, if they dealt "falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall

be made a story and a byword through the world". The sermon was largely forgotten until published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1838. It then languished until the Cold War era, when it became thought of as a foundational document in the idea of American Exceptionalism. Winthrop's aim was to establish nothing less than a new kind of model community based on the highest principles, and his words make clear the exceptional behavior needed to bring that mission to life.

"We must love brotherly without dissimulation, we must love one another with a pure heart fervently. We must bear one another's burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren ... we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection."

John Winthrop (January 12, 1587 – March 26, 1649) was an English Puritan and lawyer who became one of the leading figures in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the second English settlement in New England. He was born into a poor merchant family of merchant landowners and trained in the law. He became involved with the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629 when King Charles led a crackdown on Nonconformist religious thought. He was elected governor of that group that same year and sailed with a group of colonists to the New World in April 1630, where they founded Boston and other communities throughout Massachusetts Bay and the Charles River. He was a well respected political figure and served as governor for 12 of the first 20 years of its existence. He was considered a moderate, clashing with both the liberal and conservative factions of the religiously conservative colony, and would likely be considered authoritarian by modern standards. He wrote one of the important histories of the early colonial years, which, along with "A Model of Christian Charity", continue to influence American politics to this day.