

July 1, 2018

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

On July 4th, 1776, our Founding Fathers signed a document declaring total independence from British rule. That document was the Declaration of Independence and the brave patriots who signed it did so with the complete understanding that they would be branded as traitors by the English Crown. By affixing their signatures to that document, our forefathers soon found themselves embroiled in an eight-year war to rid themselves of an oppressive British regime once and for all. In 1668, almost one hundred years before the whispers of revolution were ever spoken out loud, William Penn wrote: *“Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants.”* Penn’s words came to fruition in 1775, when, out manned and out gunned, our forefathers renounced their dependence on the British Empire and placed it squarely in the Hands of God. All of the signatories to our Declaration of Independence were still British subjects at the time so the decision to sign it must have been as unsettling as it was uncertain for most of them. But, in their hearts they knew that if they didn’t there would be no way that any of them would ever be able to share in their God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The signers were considered by the British to be rabble-rousers and scoundrels and were threatened with being executed for treason. But, to a man, they understood that freedom would not come easily and that it would extract great personal and financial sacrifices. *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”* (2 Corinthians 3:17) Our forefathers put their unbridled faith in God and made those sacrifices willingly and without reservation. On April 18, 1775 the War for American Independence began in earnest. *“With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”* (The closing sentence of the Declaration of Independence).

On July, 4th, 2018 we will be celebrating the 242nd anniversary of our independence from British rule. We’ve all heard it said that nothing worthwhile ever comes easy. Well, it certainly wasn’t an easy start for our country yet over the last 242 years, we have grown into a mighty nation and a shining beacon of freedom to the rest of the world. Since our War for Independence drew to its dramatic climax we have been embroiled in numerous wars and conflicts and over three-quarters of a million American lives have been lost defending the freedoms that our forefathers established. *“Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves.”* (1 Peter 2:16) The American struggle for freedom began in 1776 with the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Today our national struggles continue but even as citizens of the greatest nation on the face of the earth, we have struggles in our own lives as well. In his letter to the Romans (v3:23) Paul tells us that we are all slaves to the power of sin falling short of the holiness of God. Fortunately for us, Jesus Christ died for those sins and it’s His grace that now stands supreme. Just as our forefathers renounced their dependence on the British Empire and placed it squarely in the Hands of God, we need to renounce the sin in our own lives and place our very lives in His capable hands.

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set

free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” (Romans 6:17-18) Today, we Christians are engaged in a different kind of war. Although there are those who would like to make it so, the war that we are fighting today has absolutely nothing to do with political power. Our war has everything to do with spiritual power and the enemy is coming at us from all sides. Just as our forefathers pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to one another during the Revolutionary War, as a Christian nation its incumbent upon all of us to come to Christ Jesus and pledge those very same things to His glorious cause. His crucifixion is the key that unlocks the chains that bind us to our sin so instead of allowing ourselves to become a slave to sin, let’s proclaim our own spiritual independence by putting ourselves in His capable hands and becoming a slave to the righteous power that is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) God sent His one and only Son to die a horrible death so that our sins could be forgiven! Now, here we are some two-thousand years later and wars are still being waged, hate and distrust are rampant and people are being killed at an alarming rate. It seems that every day billions of our American tax dollars are being spent to make things better but nothing ever seems to change. We can never hope gain spiritual power by throwing money at it, protesting or marching in the streets, nor can we attain it by demanding that the government provide it! Christian, the truth is just this simple; neither this government nor any other form of government can give to you what you already possess. Your “spiritual independence” is a gift from God that was paid for with the precious blood of Jesus Christ! Spiritual Independence is already yours Christian, all you have to do is come to Jesus in humility and reverence and claim it as our own! Sadly, it seems that a growing number of Americans don’t seem to understand that any more. We that do lay our claim to it with joy and passion!

Independence Day is a national celebration of freedom and a time to honor those who sacrificed mightily to reject British rule. Today, at this moment in time, Independence Day provides a golden opportunity to reaffirm our total dependence on Jesus Christ and declare our independence from sin. On July the 4th, we will gather to celebrate the birth of the United States of America but as we celebrate our earthly freedoms let’s make today our personal Independence Day as we declare our God-given spiritual independence by spreading the good news of Jesus Christ far and wide.

Enjoy your holiday Church but please don’t forget to invite Christ Jesus to your holiday festivities. Your brothers in Christ Jesus,

Brian, Rod and Carl