

Independence Day – Then and Now

Months before July 4, 1776, Thomas Jefferson expressed in a letter his desire to be free of British tyranny, even if it meant death:

Believe me, dear Sir: there is not in the British Empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But, by the God that made me, I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose; and in this, I think I speak the sentiments of America.

—Thomas Jefferson, November 29, 1775

Months later, Jefferson joined 55 other men in signing the Declaration of Independence, which concludes with this famous pledge:

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Many of these men *did* lose their fortunes, honor, and even their lives in order to secure the liberties we have enjoyed for 236 years.

But there is another tyranny that encompasses the entire globe – and from which even our Founding Fathers could not protect us. It is the tyranny of sin and death. The Bible teaches that “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23); and that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). This is a tyranny worse than any political cruelty that has or could exist.

Do you know that you can be delivered from this tyranny? God signed a “Declaration of Independence” on our behalf when He sent Jesus into the world. Jesus lived a perfect life and then died an unjust death. He took upon Himself the punishment for sin that we deserve, thus paying the “fine” on our behalf.

We who believe in Jesus are saved from what we actually deserve – separation from God (spiritual death) in a place called Hell, after we die.

How do you “believe in Jesus?” You recognize you are a sinner and believe that Jesus’ death “paid in full” God’s penalty for sin. You then repent of (turn away from) your sin, and turn to God in faith, believing that Jesus’ death was on your behalf.

If you do, then God changes your heart, adopts you into His family and makes you a citizen of His kingdom! As His child, you can be certain that you will go to Heaven when you die. Like Jefferson, however, we must want the freedom that only Jesus can offer more than we want our own (sinful) lives.

History teaches us that Americans will someday lose the freedoms we currently enjoy. How tragic it will be that so many have lost their lives to secure freedoms that were so short-lived on the timeline of human history.

Such is not the case with Jesus, who gave up His life on the cross so that we could be spared the curse of spiritual death and experience liberty and freedom **that will never be taken away**. Unlike the earthly freedoms that we, as Americans, enjoy because others paid with their lives to secure and protect these freedoms, Jesus purchased our spiritual freedom through His own sacrificial death on our behalf because He was the **only one** who could.

As we celebrate our temporary earthly freedoms together during our Independence Day celebrations, I hope that you will (if you haven’t already) also embrace the freedom and love of God that lasts forever.

The following links will help you to understand the precious gift of eternal life that Jesus made available to those who love Him.

1. A one minute clip which emphasizes that you do not want to be left behind – [Are You Ready?](#)
2. A three minute video to explain what it takes to be "[Good Enough.](#)"
3. A thirty-two minute video explaining [The Story of God and Man](#) (how Jesus came to save us from tyranny).

If you would like to know more about how you can be set free (eternally), then visit our website (www.calvarypo.org) and click on the “Know God” link. The website also includes details of our meeting times/locations, and free downloadable Bible studies of the entire Bible. If you have cable TV, you can watch our BKAT broadcast at 3PM on Tuesdays (Comcast Cable Channel 12, Wave Cable Channel 3).

Hope you will have a safe and joyful 4th,

Sincerely,
Pastor Kevin Lea