

Independence Day

Today we focus on preparing to celebrate our nation's Independence Day. As many will attest, the 4th of July comes with several mixed celebrations all across the country. From bar-b-ques to fireworks displays to parades galore it is indeed all good – but today I want to really examine what it means to be free – and to wrap our minds around freedom as we really should know it.

We are under the authority of this world ... Our nation was built on wanting a freedom in choices that we make – but we are not only free today based on the ideas of our fore-fathers.

We are free though because Jesus rose from the dead! We are free to worship a risen Savior! We are free to worship openly in the church of our choice!

We have the right to declare that we are free from the tyranny of sin that plagues so many – and even plagues some of us today! We are free to thank God for the freedom we have, because it was not free to attain!

Rm 13: 1-7 (READ)Pray.....

We have the right to declare that we are free from the tyranny of sin... why? I have three points to share with you...

Point 1 – Let everyone be subject to the Governing Authorities

We are to respect those who are over us, and Paul is making sure that we understand. However, can God be involved in that authority? Certainly!!

Did you know that God placed those authorities over us? This goes hand in hand back to the issue that the city of Montgomery experienced several years ago.

Let's see how God's authority establishes the laws that we have now.

Go to **Exodus 20** (Pause to turn there) Take a glance at verses **13-17**: Murder; Theft; Adultery; Lying: All laws of the land!

Despite what some liberals want to convince you of, these are actual laws on the books today, prosecuted against for breaking them – and yet most do not want to admit that the Bible was published WELL BEFORE these laws were in place!!

Remember the whole 10 Commandments argument in Montgomery? The issue was whether a judge was free to publish the 10 Commandments in a public court house. Those opposed argued because they were offended....

but when asked about the similarities between the 10 Commandments and our laws today ... they had no comment!

However, the purpose of today is not to talk about that specific issue – but to understand that our mission is not just centered on Paul writing to us. Jesus gave us these very same principles as well!!

Matthew 22:17-21 – Basically summed up as *“render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s!”*

This means that we are to obey the laws of the land (respect for authority, pay your bills, etc.) and at the same time give to the Lord what He is due as well! This is accomplished through tithing, service, witness, and most importantly giving of YOU in all circumstances.

If our portion of rendering unto God is to give ourselves, what are we waiting for? We have an excellent example to follow in Jesus, and so if we are following Him – following the laws of the land ought to be a piece of cake!

The conscious celebration of those laws (or freedoms) ought to go hand in hand with following the Lord’s example and direction!

Point 2 – How do we celebrate our freedom? Freedom means having the ability to do what is right (integrity**) and choose to do no wrong. **Integrity** means doing what is right, even when no one is looking.**

God owns it all ... so what we have we ought to give glory for it! No matter what stage of life you are in today, you can give God the glory for having what you have. You see, you can breath – you can get from place to place – and you can buy groceries to feed your belly. Even in the littlest things – we can celebrate our freedom.

In this world, there is real danger in celebrating Jesus Christ.

India - In 1999, Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned alive in their station wagon in the countryside of Orissa by a mob angry over Mr. Staines’s aggressive evangelism in this Hindu-majority state.

Bangladesh - Muslim villagers armed with bricks and wooden clubs savagely beat 10 Christian converts and threatened to burn down their homes if they did not leave that day.

Vietnam – (June 2007) A young ethnic minority man who refused to recant his Christian faith died from injuries received while under “official interrogation”.

Iraq – (June 2007) An unidentified armed group kidnapped eight Assyrian Christian students and teachers returning home (Note: They have been released)

Celebrating your freedom is a **privilege**, and something that we ought to take upon ourselves to be sure that we recognize.

Point 3 – How can celebrating freedom be an act of worship? Does God really care about your freedom? Jesus died to **give you** that freedom ...

God did not create robots – He has a desire that we would choose to be free with Him. Every day we have choices – and every day we have an opportunity to see God’s glory in everything, and decide that because we are free, we should act like it.

- Jesus gave us a road map to follow – a method to be free and show your freedom...
- America was founded on freedom – and with this freedom comes a price...
- Some have paid that price with their lives, and we celebrate them on the 4th ...
- Some have paid that price by continuing to serve, and we celebrate them as well

God chose to give us His Son so that we may be free – because He cared!

[John 3:16](#) ***“For God so loved the world that he GAVE ...”***

[John 8:36](#) ***“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”***

WTRUTH IS.... We should be celebrating freedom every day!

➤ **If you are set free today, then act like it!**

- ***It is ok to be spiritually separated from this world and set your mind on Kingdom business!***
- ***It is ok to drive a stake into the heart of sin and move your focus from this world to Jesus Christ.***

July 4th can be more than just a celebration of your nation’s freedom – but a celebration of what God has done for you to **PUT YOU** into this free land!

Conclusion: This week we celebrate our freedom as a nation – but chose this day to celebrate the freedom that Jesus gave you by dying on a cross –

make being a part of the nation of God more important than anything else you will do on this Earth.

It is only through the shed blood of Jesus that we can be truly free!!

Politicians do not give us our freedom; even the military does not give our freedom!!

REAL freedom comes from God through Jesus Christ, because He died on a cross to give us freedom that we would have forever and ever – which to me, is much more important than anything temporary that this world could offer!!

This July 4th make it about more than fireworks and food – Take the time to think to yourself of all you have – and get down on your knees and give God the thanks, the praise, and the glory.

This world is temporary – but Heaven and Hell are eternal. Choose this day to be free forever ... because Jesus has already paid the price.

Pray