

Free to do what?

7/3/2016

What's the big deal about the 4th of July?

Why not the 3rd, or the 5th, or the 25th?

What happened on that particular day in... what year?

Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration

of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security... (listing of all the grievances).

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

The 13 colonies thus claimed that King George had demonstrated that he was an unfit ruler, a tyrant, and that they had a moral obligation, or at least the right, to declare their independence from his rule over them.

That was 240 years ago.

As American citizens, we celebrate that decision to become an independent nation.

Independence Day- a good thing!

Good that we remember, good that we appreciate.

But as oppressive as King George may have been, his abuse of power is nothing like the abuse we receive from the control of sin.

John 8:31-37

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said,

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

³² Then you will know the truth,

and the truth will set you free.”

³³ They answered him,
 “We are Abraham’s descendants
 and have never been slaves of anyone.
 How can you say that we shall be set free?”

³⁴ Jesus replied,
 “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Once you sin, you are ensnared by that sin.
 That sin now controls you.

It controls your thinking, it controls your behavior.
 You are not free to go and do or say.
 That sin, and that sin being found out,
 and the consequences of that sin to you-
 No, you are no longer free at all.

What you thought would set you free,
 because you were not who you COULD be, your best self,
 what you thought would set you free
 actually enslaved you. That’s how it works.

Temptation, giving in to the temptation,
 then realizing the implications and consequences
 of that sin being found out... and slavery.
 It stinks, doesn’t it?
 Well, God thought so, too.

God didn’t want us to continue to live
 impoverished, slavery lives.

So He sent His Son into the world to set us free from sin...
 the first REAL Declaration of Independence.

³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
 Free to become children of God-
 that’s the whole context of this passage.

Free to get a fresh start,
 this time leaning on God for support,
 to live into, to work towards- becoming the person
 God had always created us to be in the first place,
 our truest selves.

Gal. 5:1

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-
 -whether to sin,
 to legalism, which is the context for this verse,
 or to any other “God substitute.”

Gal. 5:13-14

¹³ You, my brothers (and sisters), were called to be free.
 But do not use your freedom
 to indulge the sinful nature (sarx, flesh);
 rather, serve one another in love.

Not the word diakonos-
 the relationship of a person to their work, to what they do,
 but doulos, the word for slave-
 a relationship of submission to each other- in love.

Take a one-down position to one another.
 Assume not that others should be serving you,
 but that you are privileged to be like Jesus
 and serve others.

Paul continues-

¹⁴ The entire law is summed up in a single command:
 “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

All those commands.

All that stuff- all those obligations,
 summed up in one nice neat, tight little package,
 according to Jesus, and to Paul.
 Serve one another from a one-down position... in love.

John 13:12-17

- ¹² When he had finished washing their feet,
he put on his clothes and returned to his place.
“Do you understand what I have done for you?”
he asked them.**
- ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’
and rightly so, for that is what I am.**
- ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,
you also should wash one another’s feet.**
- ¹⁵ I have set you an example
that you should do as I have done for you.**
- ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant (doulos)
is greater than his master,
nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.**
- ¹⁷ Now that you know these things,
you will be blessed if you do them.**

**On the day before Independence Day,
we talk about willingly choosing to be a slave?
Yup, exactly.**

**Because there is no greater freedom, then freedom from sin,
and then, freedom from a sense of entitlement,
from self-worship,
which is one of the most crippling slaveries of all.**

Paul will say to us in Phil. 2:5-7

- ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**
- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped, or hung on to,**

- ⁷ but he made himself nothing,
 taking the very nature of a servant, a doulos,
 being made in human likeness.

You want to be like Jesus?

You want to grow into the mind of Christ?

1. Jesus voluntarily gave up equality with God,
 in love, for you.
2. Jesus voluntarily abandoned self-will, for you.
 How cool is that?
3. Who are you willing to voluntarily give up self-will for...
 and serve?

Not because you have to,
 not because you'll get punished if you don't,
 just, to do it, in love, for them?

Don't tell me the gospel of Jesus isn't radical!

But really, how radical is it?

1. Isn't that what parents decide to do
 before they decide to have kids,
 knowing that they are signing away
 the next how many years of their life,
 giving away freedom, for... what?
 And they do it in love.
2. Isn't that what missionaries like the Koonces,
 and Hammer and Dela,
 who run a medical clinic in Togo,
 isn't it what THEY do?
3. Isn't it what ministers do,
 when they feel called to the ministry?
4. Isn't it what elders do, and Care Group leaders,
 and Bible class teachers,

and workers in Children's church and in the nursery...

Isn't it what all of us are called to
in appreciation for what Jesus
voluntarily chose to do... for us?

Gal. 5:13-14

¹³ You, my brothers (and sisters), were called to be free.
But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh;
rather, serve one another in love.

I caught two elders wives
modeling what I am talking about here.
I think they are both out of town this morning, yes, no?

If they were here , they would be shooting me,
but go out of town, and who knows what Bob will do...

1. Fran Powell babysat for Weston and Catherine
so that they could go on a long-overdue date.
2. Cathy Ryon watched William and Lena so that
Mama Emily Asbenson could accompany
Kendell to D.C. to be inducted
into the SCOTUS BAR,
that is like a big deal,
something to do with the Supreme Court
or something, yes?

These women didn't have to do that... but they did.
They clearly did NOT do it to be called out.
They would kill me if they were here...

But there you have it.
They would say that It was no big deal... Really?
I bet the Wertz's and Asbenson's would disagree.

And I bet Jesus would disagree.

**And the cool thing is that
you people do stuff like this all the time.
I just can't report all of it
because I would have no other sermon time.**

But let's close with one more Scripture- I Thess. 4:1

**Finally, brothers (and sisters),
we instructed you how to live in order to please God,
as in fact you are living.**

**Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus
to do this more and more.**

**Brothers and sisters, you were called to be free.
Now voluntarily choose to serve one another,
to use your freedom to serve one another... in love.**