

## Sermon -- A Better Independence Day

Preached at Cloverdale Baptist Church July 3, 2022

Soon we will be celebrating 4<sup>th</sup> of July – also known as Independence Day – A key historical event

- Celebrated with fireworks, parades, ball games, etc.
- A paid holiday
- Commemorates the declaration of independence of the US, ratified by Congress on July 4, 1776.
- Congress declared they were no longer subject or subordinate to the King of England and were now united and free.

The Bible and the story of the Exodus and the freedom that God's people received appears to be a significant part of the motivation and inspiration for America's independence. Evidence is plentiful that political speeches and sermons of their day were filled with stories, examples, and quotes from the Bible which supported and affirmed their political beliefs.

- John Adams wrote in 1776 about a sermon that he had heard which featured “a Parallel between the Case of Israel and that of America, and between the conduct of Pharaoh and that of George,” Two other Founding Fathers who proposed that the seal of the United States reflect its rootedness in the story of Israel's redemption.
- Leviticus 25:10 is the inscription on the liberty Bell

However, while the story of the Exodus and perhaps greatly influenced the events leading up to America's independence, the final results of what America achieved in 1783 differs from the results God produced in Exodus for His people.

Let's take a look by comparing these historical examples.

Features of our Independence Day compared to God's independence

- They were oppressed and in bondage to the English King
  - The Hebrews were in bondage and oppressed by Pharaoh
- They appealed to King George for relief; but they were ignored
  - Moses appealed to Pharaoh to let the people go; and he was ignored
- They declared their independence before it actually was achieved
  - In Exodus, God declared independence for His people before they were actually set free
- It took courage, boldness, and great faith to fight against the King in order to be free...against a superior enemy force
  - It took faith to believe that God would actually deliver them from bondage in Egypt
- The word of God was involved and an inspiration

- The word of God through Moses encouraged the people to move toward freedom
- There was a final battle involved before they were actually free
  - Pharaoh brought his entire army in pursuit of Israel but was defeated in the Sea

The differences:

- Not everyone enjoyed the freedom that was gained. Not everyone was included in the Declaration of Independence.
- We are probably familiar with the famous section of the Declaration which states “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.”
- But while this declaration sounds good and was very likely inspired by God, in practice it wasn’t applied to everyone. Some Americans were left behind in bondage.
  - In Exodus 12, a mixed multitude of people left Egypt and bondage....it wasn’t just the Hebrews.
- The founding fathers compromised. In fact, the Declaration was edited and they removed the section dealing with slavery which Thomas Jefferson had originally included because they needed the support and unity across all of the colonies including the southern states where delegates from SC and GA requested it be removed.
  - In the Exodus Pharaoh tried to compromise 4 times
    - Ex 8 – sacrifice to God in the land
    - Ex 8 – don’t go too far away
    - Ex 10 – only let the men go, keep the children behind
    - Ex 10 – go but leave the cattle behind
  - Moses never compromised, they didn’t leave believers behind

Herein lies the problem....they didn’t stay the course!

When America strayed from the Biblical model; we missed the fullness of God’s plan.

Why is it that the freedom we obtained doesn’t look like the freedom the Children of Israel received?  
Why is it that the freedom God desires for us all was not fully achieved with America’s independence?

Pastor Thornley in his sermon last week I believe pointed out a fundamental flaw of many believers when he stated, some people want a version of Jesus that they can fashion into their own image to obtain what they want. But the Jesus of the Bible is different. I realized then, that he had preached the foundation of my sermon today.

Because if the founding fathers had stuck with the original declaration and applied the pursuit of freedom the way God designed:

- There would be little need for a Juneteenth National Independence Day Act
- Little need for a women’s suffrage movement
- And it may have prevented America from changing from the promised land to a place of bondage



So, as we celebrate the nation's 246<sup>th</sup> birthday, I think we should celebrate the success but learn from the mistakes. We should follow God's plan. What does that plan look like?

Galatians 5:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

<sup>7</sup> Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

<sup>13</sup> For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

<sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

<sup>15</sup> But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

<sup>16</sup> This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

John 8:32, 36

**You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free:** There is nothing like the freedom we can have in Jesus.

**Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.....Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."**

What should we be doing today?

- Follow God's plan and let Him set us free from sin and bondage
- Understand the truth of God's word and stay free....stand fast
- **Finish what America started**; use our liberty to love and serve others
- Walk in the Spirit; do it for the glory of God so that others can be free
  - Keep self out of the way
  - Keep traditions and your preferences out of the way
  - Don't compromise; remember it is for His glory....freedom from sin
    - We have used our worldly freedom to celebrate sin rather than the truth
  - Keep politics out of it. It was a political move that caused incomplete freedom and kept people in bondage
  - Fear not – people operating out of fear and greed will miss the glory of God
    - In my research I discovered in the West Indies they had developed a Slave Bible but it wasn't for the cause of their freedom, but instead out of fear they denied slaves God's truth.



- Slave Bible: The publishers of the slave bible thought these sections, such as the Exodus, the Book of Psalms, and the Book of Revelation, "could instill in slaves a dangerous hope for freedom and dreams of equality."
- Stick to God's plan and know it is a spiritual problem and a sin problem

The freedom that God gives is better than the freedom the world provides. If we pursue a worldly freedom, we will continue to miss G-d's plan. It is not a race problem, a crime problem, not an environmental problem, not a state's right problem, it is a sin problem

I'm going to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July proudly. I celebrate it because the Declaration was a step in the right direction. It unified a young nation that needed to rally together. It is good in fact that we celebrate the boldness and accomplishments of the founding fathers; I celebrate it because it is an example of what I believe to be men who desired to follow the word of God and apply it correctly.....who genuinely wanted to create a nation that honored and served God.

But I'm going to celebrate it because they fell short, but it provides us the opportunity to finish what they started so that this nation can truly bring honor to a holy God and look less like the world. That we not be found as hypocrites but go back and set free those that were left behind in sin.

Our past doesn't define our future, we can change now.

Example of Patrick on his bike.

What independence looks like in the Bible

- God serving
- There is a spiritual process involved
- It begins and ends with Jesus
- Is a continuous process
- Reveals the truth and shares that truth to the world
- Brings glory to God

It is not how you start, it's how you finish.....there is still a work for us to do.