

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Our Independence Day

By T. Sean Sullivan

Only once a year we celebrate our country's declared independence. In the preamble to our country's "Declaration of Independence" we are told why it was, that as a people, we looked for deliverance from the oppressing government of Great Britain.

"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."

Those words are two hundred and thirty years old and perhaps are not understandable without the use of our modern day English. The meaning is this: The founders of this nation understood that Government is important and not to be thrown

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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away on a whim. They knew that mankind was typically willing to suffer under the constraints of "the system", just because he knew "the system" was necessary. They knew, however, that a greater right of freedom, security, and expression could not be long refused. It was only when the government over them continued to hinder their rights through a series of tyrannical abuses that they determined to be set free from the oppression.

Now, this is not intended to be a history lesson, there is something more to consider in our spiritual lives with these words in mind. What do those things have to do with our spiritual focus today? Consider the parallels that we have in this life as we seek our own independence from oppression. We have been given the opportunity of

freedom-through Jesus Christ. We, however, are not much different than we have ever been. We will typically rather keep suffering than to seek freedom. However, when the recognition of betterment is known and the frustrations of the oppression hinders, we will seek the change that is necessary to be freed.

The Oppression of Sin

The truth about sin: Do you remember the children's story about Hansel and Gretel? The house in the woods was covered in candy. Inside was certain death at the hands of a kid-eating witch. The witch knew how to make a dangerous thing look good. In much the same way the devil works his way with sin to "sugar coat" the death it holds (1 Peter 5:8 "seeking whom he may devour").

Sin is usually candy coated. The Prodigal son looked across to the far-off country with dazzled eyes thinking, I am sure, that life would be so much better there (Luke 15:11-18). The devil tempts with pride and lust (1 John 2:15-16). Both of which are based on our own desires-things we want and like-so that we are blinded to the certain death that lies beneath their surface. Sin can only offer slavery (John 8:34) and death (Romans 6:23).

Sin is a hopeless situation. Sin alienates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and the only way back to God is through His Son Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Man has not changed. We are still willing to be oppressed until the recognition of betterment is known and the frustrations of the oppression hinder our achieving that betterment. For the sake of our own understanding and reasonable thinking we need to expose sin for what it really is and ultimately does.

The Suffering of Sin:

Sin is the root cause of all distresses. We know this since the words of righteousness are designed to result in a life of: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). These beautiful things are proof of walking according to the word as delivered by the Spirit. Anything else is from sin (whether sin of omission or commission).

Examine the main problems in today's world: Broken homes, infidelity, and premarital sex, rebellion in the young and the older, all types of chemical abuses, humanism and atheism. All of these sins and sinful attitudes result in the modern predicaments of anxiety, depression, guilt, frustration, anger, selfishness, and disease.

All of our predicaments are symptoms of these sins. Let's look at Galatians 5:19-21-"The works of the flesh". Just taking the time to look into verse nineteen make note of just some of the problems that result from these sins: Adultery: Leads to broken marriages and homes, rebellious children, generational repetition, disregard for God. Fornication: Sexual sin, leads to: Unwed-mothers, teen pregnancies, STD's, depletion of self-worth, the destruction of the sanctity of marriage. Uncleanliness: Immorality, leads to: immodest dress, language, and behavior, contributes heavily to the first two sins on this list. Lewdness: Leads to: inappropriate gender roles, the loss of God's design in the role of male and female, the home foundation disdained.

Truly, life without God is set for disappointment because the world and its lusts will

come to nothing (1 John 2:15-17). Life without God is aimless; without direction because man is incapable of finding his own way (Jeremiah 10:23). Life with God is without foundation because we have nothing sure or certain without God (Ephesians 2:12). These hopeless frustrations are the end awaiting all those who refuse to fear God and choose rather to serve themselves in sin. It is when the oppression of this hopelessness continually burdens us that we will seek the relief that is available to us through change.

The Freedom from Sin

We can have independence or freedom from our sins. Through Jesus Christ we can be freed/saved. John 3:16 says, "He that believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Also Mark 16:16 reads, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved". What did Jesus do to make this work?

God demands sacrificial atonement for sin. Under the Old Covenant God designated the blood of animals as a measure of atonement (Hebrews 9:22; Hebrews 10:1-3). Under the New Covenant God saw fit to have one ultimate sacrifice-the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:4-12). The declaration of our independence from sin was "written" with the blood of Christ. In order that we might live, free from the oppression of sin and with the security of a certain hope, Jesus Christ shed His blood and died (Matthew 28:1-6; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

How do we apply Christ's hope-giving sacrifice to our sins? This is the question the Jews asked of Peter and his answer was clear (Acts 2:37-38). This is also what the Eunuch wanted to accomplish and he did-through obedience of the truth (Acts 8:34-38).

Conclusion: If you are not a Christian today then the opportunity is yours to realize that sin is oppression, hopelessness, and certain failure. The time for you to see the hope that is available through Jesus Christ our Savior, is now. Today is the day to make the changes in your life in order to have the burden of your sins taken away.

As a country, we certainly continue to holdfast to our Independence. Even more so, as Christians, we should be holding fast to our freedom from sin. If you are a Christian today then rejoice in the fact that you have found your freedom from sin through Christ.

Let others see you rejoicing so that they may desire the same. The hope of freedom is for all who are willing to obey, is today the day? Today you can make your life right with God. Today you can be freed from the bondage of sin. Today can be your Independence Day.