

Declaration of Independence

Text : II Timothy 2: 14-26

INTRODUCTION :

A. This week our nation celebrated the anniversary of the signing of our Declaration of Independence.

1. Our forefathers came to a wild and unsettled country in search of the freedom to worship.
 - a. There was no civil structure of any kind.
 - b. There was no infrastructure.
 - c. They did not know how to survive in the new land.
2. They were willing to endure whatever it took to be allowed to worship as they chose.
 - a. Most left their families behind.
 - b. They left all their possessions they could not carry.
 - c. Many died.
3. Those who survived learned to love all types of freedom.
 - a. As the country became more developed, the King of England took more interest in it.
 - b. The colonies became a source of income for the king of England.
 - c. Being far away, the objections colonists were ignored.

B. When the colonists could bear their perceived grievances no more, they declared their independence.

1. Their declaration document was masterfully crafted and powerfully stated their case, but it did not obtain their freedom.
2. They remained subjects of the king, but were declared to be rebels, to be criminals.
3. Their declaration resulted in years of conflict and suffering.

C. It was those years of conflict and suffering that resulted in their independence.

1. The seed from which it all grew was the colonists' desire to be free to worship God.
2. When they established their free society, they founded it on their godly values.
3. This enabled God to use them establish the greatest nation on the earth.

TRANSITION :

From these earthly events we can learn some valuable spiritual lessons.

I. Declaring Independence infers a desire to be free from something or someone.**A. In our national experience :**

1. Our forefathers made a physical commitment in search of spiritual freedom.
2. In time they came to understand that the one who oppressed them in the old country would oppress them in the new world as well.
3. Declaring their independence was a logical response.

B. One's spiritual experience is parallel.

1. Before one declares independence from sin, he must become aware of sin.
 - a. People living in this sinful world come to view sin as the normal condition.
 - b. Whatever his circumstances, it's the nature of man to seek to be accepted by his peers.
 - 1) This is why Egyptians married within their own family.
 - 2) It's also why God forbade the Israelites to intermarry with the idolaters.
 - c. Millions are born and die w/o being exposed to people who seek to live above sin.
2. One will not seek to be free from sin until he comes to view sin as an oppressor.
 - a. Sin works through the flesh to enslave people. (**Stockholm syndrome**)
 - b. The flesh makes a good servant, but a horrible master. (**It can never be satisfied.**)
 - c. The flesh is often self-destructive. (**It continues to demand until it dies of excess.**)
3. People of the world don't realize the source of their sorrows and dissatisfactions.
 - a. The acts of sin are clearly observable ... violence, dishonesty, addiction, immorality
 - b. Likewise, the results of evil are obvious. ... broken lives, death, destroyed, etc.
 - c. Few seek the actual cause of evil ... **SATAN** ... It is not inherent w/in man.

C. The world needs Christians to show them ... :

1. That sin is the source of suffering and of spiritual slavery.
2. That Satan is their oppressor ... the source of evil and suffering.
3. That God sent Jesus to rescue mankind from the oppression of Satan.

II. A Declaration of Independence must be accompanied by a willingness to do whatever it takes to gain one's independence.**A. One does not gain independence from an oppressor w/o a struggle.**

1. Our country did not become independent just because we declared our independence.

2. It required years of struggle :
 - a. We were cut off from the benefits of the oppressor.
 - b. Many hard-fought battles cost the lives of multitudes of people.
 - c. A great number of our soldiers starved and froze to death.
3. The Declaration of Independence was not well received by all our citizens.
 - a. Those who desired to stay under the oppressor tried to prevent independence.
 - b. Families were torn apart and friendships destroyed.
 - c. On both sides, thousands lost everything they owned.

B. Likewise, declaring one's independence from sin and Satan doesn't make it so.

1. A declaration can be just a dream or it can become a goal.
 - a. Everyone has hopes and dreams, but most of them are not realized.
 - b. Dreams are only accomplished because they first became goals.
2. Setting a goal involves formulating and applying a plan of action.
 - a. **ill.-** The common goal of losing weight involves :
 - 1) gathering nutritional and "how-to" information
 - 2) diet, exercise and monitoring.
 - b. **ill.-** When saving money becomes a goal :
 - 1) A source of income must be generated
 - 2) A set amount of the income must be set aside no matter what.
3. In like manner, overcoming sin involves gathering knowledge.
 - a. **John 8: 32 -cf- 17:17 ...** It is only the truth of God's word that sets men free.
 - b. The word only liberates when it is handled properly.
 - 1) **II Tim. 2: 15-** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
 - 2) **Read ... II Pet. 3: 14-18**
- c. The church must strive to be a source of truth for those who seek truth and freedom.
 - 1) **I Tim. 3: 15-** ... I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.
 - 2) **II Tim. 2: 24-26** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

4. The truth must not only be gathered, it must be obeyed, **i.e.**, put into action.
 - a. **Rom. 2: 5-8** But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶ who will render to each person according to his deeds: ⁷ to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.
 - b. **Read ... Rom. 6: 12-18**
 - c. **Matt. 7: 21-23**
 - d. **Heb. 5: 9-** ... He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

III. One needs help to free himself from a powerful adversary. (physical or spiritual)

- A. This was seen to be true in the American struggle for independence.
 1. Our desire, our commitment, and our sacrifices were not enough to free us.
 2. Our oppressor was much stronger than us and had more resources.
 3. Were it not for the aide of the French, we would have failed.
- B. When a person fights to free himself from the bondage of sin, he wars against a vastly superior enemy.
 1. Satan has oppressed man from the garden until this very day.
 - a. Satan's influence brought the flood which nearly obliterated mankind.
 - b. The story of Job illustrated Satan's power and viciousness to work in our lives.
 - c. Time and again he caused God's people of old to go into captivity and oppression.
 2. Satan is alive and just as maliciously active today.
 - a. Satan is always active and up to date. (**tech savvy and relentless**)
 - 1) He has corrupted the great masses of man making them captives.
 - 2) The society is so corrupted it's hard for anyone to grow up seeking righteousness.
 - b. Satan is leading our nation away from its godly roots.
 - 1) Our Christians principles are being scorned.
 - 2) God blessed this nation because of its Christian values.
 - 3) Those who advocate evil are more aggressive than those who seek godliness.
 - c. Satan has brought many congregations of God's church to ruin.
 - 1) Some have left the true path to seek after worldliness.

- 2) Others have reacted by going on defense, becoming legalistic, judgmental, and fossilizing in traditions.
- 3) MANY have been lulled into apathy and inactivity.

C. God is infinitely more powerful than man's oppressor.

1. God is ready, willing, and able to help us gain our freedom from Satan.
2. However, God will not become just another captor to oppress us.
3. God has provided a way of escape from Satan, but man must choose to use it.
 - a. **John 3: 16** ... A person must come to believe he is lost and Jesus can save him.
 - 1) **Acts 16: 31- They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, ..."**
 - 2) This is the first step in the process of salvation.
 - b. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, but the lost must cry out to Him in faith.
Read ... Rom. 10: 8-13
 - c. Those who want to be free from sin must be willing to turn loose of it and turn to God.
Acts 3: 19-20 Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, (Jesus will receive anyone who turns to Him.)
 - d. Those who turn from sin must commit to an exclusive relationship with their savior.
 - 1) **Acts 2: 37-38 , Acts 22: 16 , I Pet. 3: 21 (cf - Heb. 9: 14)**
 - 2) **Remember ... Rom. 6: 12-18**

CONCLUSION :

A. Thus, being made free from sin has many common factors with the quest for political freedom.

1. It starts with a desire to be free.
2. Desire is followed by a declaration of commitment to begin the process.
3. The verbal commitment is followed by actions, usually a long difficult struggle.

B. No one succeeds alone; he must join with others and seek a savior .. Jesus the Christ.

1. One must choose a savior who is capable of providing what is needed.
2. One must be able to trust his savior and be willing to obey him.

C. The cost of freedom is eternal vigilance.

1. **Matt. 24: 10-14** (*This speaks of the fall of Jerusalem, but is typical of judgment.*)
2. **Rev. 2: 10** ... There will be tough times, but faithfulness is rewarded. (**II Pet. 1:2-12**)