

“Relationship With God”

By Parrish Lee

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“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.” –from the Declaration of Independence

Galatians 5:1 stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...

On this great day that we set aside to celebrate the birth of our nation, I would be wrong if I didn't share just a little. God brings understanding. I thank God in humility. Maybe you have felt like you were graduating college, and then realized that you were really only graduating kindergarten; or only starting kindergarten. I know that God has taken me back to kindergarten many times since I have been saved. God orders a blessing for His people in our lives.

It would be impossible to cover the entire background of our Independence Day, but I would like to pose just a few interesting points:

1. We were once thirteen colonies, under the auspices of Great Britain.
2. It is estimated that only about one-third of the colonists were in favor of rebelling against Great Britain. One-third continued to side with the British. The last third were neutral concerning the rebellion and the break with Great Britain.
3. Britain wanted to make up some of its costs by taxing the colonies.
4. Women fought in the Revolutionary War many times after their husbands were killed or wounded.
5. Britain solicited other sources to fight the colonists, including mercenaries.
6. Not all of the colonies voted for independence at first.
7. Between 1607 and the French and Indian War, the colonies were isolated by the mother country due to the policy of ‘salutary neglect.’ The king argued that the colonies should take care of their own affairs—akin to being orphaned but still taxed.

We all in the course of our lives remember the lessons of our youth: Don't put your hands on a hot stove (and you certainly won't do that twice), look both ways before crossing the street (let's hope you don't have to learn that by experience), but we in our country have forgotten the lessons that history has taught us; why we have Independence Day in the first place. I just want to take a minute or so to pay homage to those who have paid (some with blood) that we might partake of so great a nation as we have here today. So here we are today, recipients of a liberty and freedom that others paid for that we might share.

We all have one thing in common: We have all been the servants of sin. You might even say that we have depended on sin. Some people might challenge me on that, "Oh, well, I've never sinned." The Bible says that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). "Oh, but I haven't sinned the way that *he* sinned." But when you appear before God, the Father of Lights, in who is no variableness, nor shadow of turning (James 1:17), every wrinkle, and every little spot stands out.

If I can be a little plain about my next point: Sin doesn't represent our best interests. Satan, and sin, are the ultimate in taxation without representation. The Bible says that the wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23), and that is the ultimate tax.

My next point is the alienation that sin brings, the salutary neglect. When you get caught up in sin, you find yourself alone.

Isaiah 59:1-2 ...iniquities have separated between you and your God...

So, on the one hand we have the ultimate taxation without representation, and on the other hand we have the alienation and neglect that sin brings.

Sidebar point: Great Britain looked for specialists in fear to put down the quest for independence. They didn't want to kill everybody, they wanted to be able to kill a few, and then control the rest with fear. Did you ever notice how specialized temptation can be? Something that might trip somebody else up may have zero effect on you, but the devil's got a special box with your name on it...

So, this brings us to who would bring us liberty:

Luke 4:18-19 ...to set at liberty then that are bruised.

Along with the celebration of our independence of our nation, I present a celebration for our spiritual independence; not depending on sin and the vices of Satan, and the things that he uses to come after us, but to do as our Scripture thought for the day:

Galatians 5:1 stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...

Liberty: ἄφεσις— from G863 (ἀφίημι); *freedom*; (figurative) *pardon* :- deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

Just as, in colonial times, one-third of the people wanted to remain yoked to King George, today there are many people that say, "I don't want to be delivered from my sin; that's part of my identity. That's just what I do."

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Mark 10:46-52 ...thy faith hath made thee whole...

They didn't have a lot of technology then. What you did with your hands was how you lived. That's why Bartimaeus was a beggar; he was blind, and dependent on others. You know that the things that you are dependent on are not necessarily your friends. You notice that when he first started crying out to Jesus, the people that had been helping him started telling him to shut up; they didn't want him to gain his independence. And, in verse fifty, it says that he cast away his garment; he wasn't bringing his old baggage to Jesus. He wanted to see all that Jesus had for him. You notice that, in verse fifty-two, when Jesus told him to go his way, he followed Jesus; in other words, Jesus' way *was* his way. Some of us here today need to ignore what everybody else has to say and get what Jesus has for us.

Matthew 9:20-22 ...thy faith hath made thee whole...

The crowd was thronging around, and this woman pushed her way through (which means that she pushed some people out of her way) to get to Jesus. Some of us have had something crippling us and our walk with God, and, like this woman, we would say that now is the time for us to press through and be healed; to be delivered from the binds of whatever has got a hold on us.

You might say, Parrish Lee, what kind of a message is this? You're supposed to be talking about God and His will, not all this patriotic stuff.

1 Peter 2:15-17 ...Honour the king.

How does this all sum up in our collective Christian life?

John 8:31-36 ...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.