

# Freedom!

Romans 8:1-17

Sunday July 4, 2021

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*Now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

—Romans 8:1-2 NLT

Two hundred forty-five years ago today, our forefathers signed the Declaration of Independence. The colonists in America declared their independence from the British Crown. They would then fight the revolutionary war to secure that freedom. July 4th is the day we recognize our liberation as a nation that allows us to be self-governed. Citizens of other countries have come here over the centuries seeking that same blessing of being liberated. Being an American is a great privilege - one we cannot forget!

As we have been reminded in recent months, not everyone experienced freedom in the early years of our country. Slaves brought from Africa would not taste freedom until the emancipation proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln. Many black Americans see Juneteenth (June 19th) as their liberation day. On June 19th, 1865, slaves in Texas became the final slaves to hear about the Emancipation Proclamation. While our nation still grapples with civil rights and equality among all Americans, July 4th reminds us that freedom and equality can be a reality as we understand it and fight for it!

For the European colonists, being free from the King of England's massive control and taxation represented freedom. For liberated slaves, being released from the ownership of other men provided freedom. The Bible tells us that all human beings, no matter their skin color, are enslaved to sin. If we try to be righteous enough on our own to merit forgiveness and heaven, then we become enslaved to the law of the Old Testament. We seek to fulfill a moral code given by God outside of us. No matter what, we are enslaved to our sin or our own self-righteousness. Jesus came to free us from that slavery. His death, burial, and resurrection provide all that is needed to be saved by His grace.

Without the finished work of Christ to save us, we would all fall under God's eternal punishment. Without Christ, we are all condemned. There are no exceptions, and there will be no excuses. But when we place our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, that punishment is removed. The judgment is lifted. *"Now there is no condemnation for those who belong to*

*Christ Jesus"* (Romans 8:1). When we belong to Christ Jesus, the judgment that hovered over us and our eternal destiny are removed by God's grace--forever. That is truly an incredible gift and blessing from God.

If you know Jesus, you don't have to worry that God will throw all of your failures and sins in your face one day to punish or embarrass you. The condemnation was lifted the day you trusted Christ as your Savior. The condemnation will never again hover over you. You are free! The freedom from God's judgment provides a much greater freedom than any declaration or proclamation of men ever could.

Only through Jesus can we be forgiven of our sins. Only through Jesus can the judgment we deserve be removed. Only through Jesus, are we free!

**Being free as an American is a great privilege. Being free before God is an eternal blessing!**

## Today's Prayer

*Thank you Lord for the freedom I have as an American. Even more, thank you for removing all judgment and condemnation from my standing before you. Help me to live in the confidence and clarity your grace gives me every day!*