

July always brings with it contemplation of the gift of liberty. In 1775 Patrick Henry said, “Give me liberty or give me death!”, emphasizing the sacrifice that goes into acquiring something so valuable. This year I am even more transfixed on the impact of July 4, 1776 and what it really means to all of us as Americans. It is disheartening to realize that some of our freedoms are diminishing; we are in a battle to hold on to the purity of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and our way of living that we and our ancestors have spent the last 245 years fighting to maintain.

It’s with great sadness and concern that I consider where we were as a country just a few decades ago when I was a child compared to where we are today. In my lifetime, we have witnessed major changes to the “America” we dearly love. Freedom is a gift that should be cherished and never taken for granted. We seem to be recklessly moving in a direction away from the liberties that so many others in the world covet and that our forefathers fought and died to preserve.

I am amazed to realize that there has always been a battle for freedom, whether it has been physical or spiritual. There are those of us who say we are free, but are we really free? That is a question I have been pondering within myself. By God’s grace, I have been released from the chains of addiction for over 20 years. I am extremely grateful for this and never want to forget what I have been delivered from; yet, is there more to experience in Him that I have been unable to attain? Do I find myself returning to a way of thinking and operating that is tied to the former way of living? Do I allow “self,” religion, or preconceived notions to get in the way of being totally free?

Paul poses this same question to the Galatians in his letter to them. Many call it ‘The Magna Carta of Christian Liberty’. They were being infiltrated by ‘legalizers’ and told that they had to add portions of the Law in with the gospel of grace in Christ. He wrote to them in Galatians 1:6 -

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all.”

I would suggest reading the letter in its entirety. There is so much to glean from and I am only highlighting a glimmer of the truth that is composed, but there is a verse that pinpoints the secret to more freedom. Galatians 4:7 says, “Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child.”

Something powerful occurs within us when we fully absorb the fact that we are sons/daughters of the Most High. Becoming fully aware that We are God’s children is a life-transforming truth that opens up a door to unprecedented freedom.

“...you are no longer a slave, but God’s child...”



Nick



VBS 2021

"Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised and his greatness is unsearchable." – Psalm 145:2-3

Over the last week, as a Children's Ministry team, and along with our children ages 6 thru 11, we came to the very same conclusion. Our God is so great, vast, and wonderful that the more we look and search for Him, we realize He is unsearchable. There are some things we will never understand about our God, but it should never stop us from searching and coming to know Him in a deeper way. That's exactly what we did at this year at VBS. From July 14th thru the 16th we spent 3 days with our kids discovering who God is and what the bible says about Him - His greatness, how He is almighty, and how He is trustworthy. Along with each days teaching we had fun with skits, games, crafts, science experiments, and, of course, snacks. We were thankful to be a part of the lives of these children and to see them grow in the Lord. I often pass by a sign when I walk through the nursery building here at Dunklin that serves as a reminder of why we do what we do on a daily basis. It is a picture of Brother Mickey and a quote we often heard him say, "We are investing in the next generation ". We are grateful that we get to be a part of such a valuable investment. What a privilege it is!

Love,

Patrick & Michelle Koski

