

Free indeed: John 8:32

Today America celebrates yet another Independence Day. Yes, without a doubt, the day is marked with joy, celebration, festivity and of course you can hear and see the night sky lit up by fire crackers. Do you hear bells ringing throughout the United States at high noon on July 4th? This annual Independence Day tradition in towns and cities throughout this land serve to remind us of the sacrifices, character, ideas, ideals and faith that have gone into the making of our national history. The sound of these bells calls us back to that meaningful day, July 4, 1776, when the good old U.S.A. was born. Those of us who are born again believers look back further, to the events that reveal an even truer kind of freedom: that which Jesus Christ came to offer. Yes, as America celebrates independence from those who oppressed her, and as we join in on this celebration, shall we ponder for a moment the freedom that we experience through Jesus Christ?

Jesus said “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” At this statement the Jews who heard him were provoked, as they claimed that they had never been in bondage. How blind can one get? As we scan the history of these people, we find that they were constantly in and out of slavery, and the very moment they bragged about being free, they were under Roman rule. But this kind of self deception can creep into our lives even today. How often we, who claim to be free, are bound by sin and sinful habits! But Jesus came so that we may truly experience liberty and freedom. Jesus himself is the truth that can set us free. He is truly the embodiment and the source of truth. Only Jesus can set us free from the dire consequences of sin and self deception. Sin has the power to destroy, dominate and dictate our actions. But Jesus came to set us free from this power and make us the men and women that God wants us to be. Jesus can break the power of sin that tends to enslave us. How often people equate freedom with being able do whatever they want. That kind of freedom often leads a person to multiple forms of enslavement. Jesus does not offer a kind of freedom that would enslave mankind again and again; but rather the kind of freedom that enriches one as he follows God.

As we look carefully into the teachings of Christ we will understand that Jesus taught of a freedom that led to bondage. Consider the words of Jesus: “Verily, Verily I say unto you. Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin (John 8:34)”. In other words, Jesus made it clear in his teachings that sin, no matter how liberating it might sound, always leads to slavery and bondage. Going through life ruled by self-will, self-trust and self-assertion leads to a detrimental bondage. No one who claims to be a follower of Jesus can be a master to himself. At the same time Jesus spoke of a bondage that leads to freedom. A true follower of Christ has renounced his or her way to follow the way of Christ. Bondage to the Lord leads to authentic and genuine freedom. A true follower of Jesus lives to please only one person: Jesus Christ. A true follower of Jesus cannot be a slave to sin, but is a slave to the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

As America celebrates her Independence shall we be grateful to the Lord for this beautiful land and all those who have sacrificed their lives to make this great nation of ours free? One can live in a free land and yet be bound, but we thank our Lord and savior Jesus Christ who has set us free from the clutches of sin and Satan!