

*July 1, 2018  
Sunday Morning Service  
Independence Day  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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**OUR DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE**  
**1 Corinthians 1:30-2:5**

Wednesday our nation celebrates our two-hundred and forty-second birthday. The day of birth for the United States of America is set on July 4, 1776 when representatives from thirteen independent states gathered at Independence Hall in Philadelphia to draft and sign the Declaration of Independence from England and, in particular, from the tyrant King George III. Actually, the Declaration was drafted on July 2 at the Pennsylvania State House, which was later called Independence Hall because of this momentous occasion. Congress voted on and passed the Declaration on July 4. But it wasn't actually signed until August 2.

We are all familiar with the Declaration of Independence. But very few Americans have ever read the declaration. Therefore, I would like to read for you this document that is the foundation of the independent states that formed the United States of America. Or, more accurately, I will read the first half of the document and forego all the grievances leveled against King George personally.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

“The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America. 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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.”

And that is why we are not citizens of the United States of Great Britain. For the most part this declaration is accurate. However, a glaring omission runs throughout the document. It is true that in the course of human events governments do change. It is true that good governors can become despots and take away the freedoms of the people.

But, it is also true that we citizens of the United States of America have been experiencing enslavement by a burgeoning, unchecked bureaucracy for many years now. It is unsettling to many of us to think on this week when we celebrate our independence from tyranny, that we are once again enslaved by tyrants—career politicians and unelected bureaucrats who live above the law with no concern for the good of the people. Someone, somewhere is going to wonder if it is time again to do what our Declaration of Independence proposes. What is our alternative? What can we do?

We should begin by looking at the error that permeates the Declaration of Independence. Humans only “think” they raise up

governments, separate from governing authorities, create nations or determine world leaders. God makes it quite clear in His Word that He raises up kings and nations (Amos 6:14). God determines allotted periods and boundaries of the nations (Acts 17:26). God holds the heart of kings in His hand to direct them according to His will (Proverbs 21:1). Rulers are God's ministers and He ordains their authority. *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God (Romans 13:1).* Ultimately, God will create the eternal kingdom, and we who are citizens there will be ruled by the only prefect king, King Jesus (Daniel 7:14).

Therefore, in an age of uncertainty, a time of political and national upheaval, the best response for us is to trust the Author of governments. Yes, we should do all that we are able to do within the freedoms and opportunities to affect good government. But superceding all plans and activities must be our Declaration of Dependence on the Author of authority. Paul laid down the essential principles of this declaration for Christians who lived in Corinth. As his letters to them indicate, those folks tended toward independence from Christ. Instruction that was good for them is good for us also.

### **We Depend on Christ for Life (1:30-31).**

God has made Christ life to us. *He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption (v.30).* This statement teaches that Christ is the essence of life. The pronoun *He* refers back to the previous statement, *“So that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (v.29).* Obviously, this teaches that God is the source of your life. All who believe the Bible are convinced that because God is creator He is the source of life. It is not that God is just the author of life in general but of my life in particular. In other words, we conclude that it is by God's will and God's work that I live.

But the issue here is how God's work through Christ gives us abundant life, eternal life, life as God intended it to be, life lived in fellowship with Him. This kind of life is only possible through Christ —by His work of redemption in which Christ paid the penalty for sin.

Through that work, He opened the way for offending sinners to be reconciled to God our Creator.

So then, what is life? According to human wisdom, life is bounded by the limitations of this passing life. Within those limitations, people conclude that the essence of life is to collect the most toys. To live is to gain the most knowledge possible. To really live is to pile up the most experiences, to relentlessly pursue the new and novel, to be famous, known, or popular. Life is a matter of completing your bucket list of desires before you die. And then die you will. And then what becomes of your massive collection of knowledge, experiences, and stuff? After achieving incredible wisdom, possessions, accomplishments, and power, Solomon concluded, *Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun (Ecclesiastes 2:11).*

According to God, the author of eternal life, the essence of life is revealed in four areas: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1:30). Generally, wisdom is the accrual of knowledge coupled with the ability to put that knowledge to work in everyday circumstances. Through Christ, we gain the knowledge of God's person and character and the ability to interpret life through God's will (which is good, acceptable and complete, Romans 12:2). That wisdom begins with salvation, a right relationship with God. Solomon concluded that *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight (Proverbs 9:10).* That kind of life is possible only through the work of Christ.

Second is the characteristic of righteousness. This is God's standard or measure of what is right. We are born in a condition opposed to God's righteousness. But through Christ's work on the cross, God takes away our unrighteousness and replaces it with His righteousness. When God gives us salvation, He declares that we are right and clothes us in Christ's righteousness. Only then are we able to live out the righteousness in life.

The third characteristic of real life is sanctification. In this trait God immediately sets us apart for Himself at the moment of salvation. But throughout life, we are being set apart for God more and more as we are becoming more like Christ. Ultimately, we will

be completely conformed to Christ at the moment of our glorification when we are with Him after death.

Fourth is redemption. This doctrine teaches us that God purchased us for Himself at the cost of Christ's sacrifice. He bought us out of slavery to sin. Therefore, the life He gives is freedom—the opposite of slavery to sin.

This is the work God has done for us through Christ. We did not purchase our freedom. We did not fight for our freedom like our forefathers fought for freedom from King George. We did not even make a declaration to be independent from sin. God in His grace apprehended us and gives us true freedom from sin in Christ.

That is why we boast in the Lord. *Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord" (v.31).* We can be quite sure that boasting will happen in this life. It is natural to boast in who or what we are. We love to compare and conclude that we are better, wiser, richer, better looking, and so forth. Therefore, we are typically unfair to compare ourselves selectively with those who "don't measure up." Stop to think about who you pick for friends and what motivates you to choose those particular people as opposed to others.

It is natural for us to boast in what we accomplish. This the essence of politics and television. They teach us too well. Neither can you escape boasting at work or even at church. It is obvious throughout your neighborhood. Maybe it is most obvious when you are on vacation around people who you don't know, people who pretend to be something or someone they are not.

It is also natural for us to boast in what we believe. We conclude that our religion is the only right one. Our particular interpretation of difficult to understand doctrines has to be the only right one. Our good works are more in number or of greater importance than the average guy, which means I will probably get into heaven. And so we continue the error of the Pharisees generation after generation.

Conversely, those who depend on the Lord boast in Him. People who enjoy a right relationship with the Lord (fear the Lord) know that He has given life eternal. People who are living in true wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption fully realize that they did not attain these things through their own strength. Redeemed people know that we owe everything to God's grace

poured out on us through Christ Jesus. People who have been regenerated by the miracle of the Holy Spirit know that we are fully dependent on God working for us through Christ.

Do you know that? It is one thing to have academic knowledge about these truths but something different to experience it. The Lockheed Martin, F-35 fighter jet is an amazing combat aircraft. It flies at 1.6 times the speed of sound, meaning it tops out at 1,200 m.p.h. It has all the latest stealth technology that allows it to fly almost invisibly through much radar. It can take off and land vertically. In a tight turn, the jet creates a g-force of 9.9 which means the pilot feels like he weighs almost 10 times what he really weighs. Would you like to ride in one? I would, except the F-35 is a single-seater and I have no experience whatsoever in flying such a machine. Knowing some facts about an F-35 and wishing to experience it is not at all the same as being there.

Reading about being dependent on God is not the same as being dependent on Him. Acknowledging what He has done for us through Christ is a good start toward experiencing dependence.

### **We Should Declare our Dependence (2:1-4).**

Paul taught us in this text to determine to speak of Christ (vv.1-2). But while we are intent on speaking out about our dependence on Christ, we must avoid trying to impress others with human wisdom. Paul confessed, *And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom (v.1).* The testimony of God is the truth about God's work in your life.

Paul certainly had much to say about God's work. He was a very intelligent man who had studied the Scriptures all his life. He had a unique and life-changing experience on the Damascus Road. But Paul was not interested in trying to impress people with his knowledge or experience. Maybe you too have learned a lot about Christ. Many of you have been born again, living in fellowship with Christ for many years. Some of you have spend your whole lifetime studying about Jesus in the Bible. Some of you have enjoyed some rather amazing transformations from a life of sin to a life of full dependence on Christ. You need to declare your dependence on God.

But, when you share the testimony of God, be real. Hopefully you have learned much about God through the study of His Word. No doubt you have had some great experiences of fellowship along the way to the Celestial city. Tell the wonderful news authentically. Don't try to impress people with theological terms. Just tell how God has revealed to you that you are fully dependent on Him.

Because of our relationship with God through Christ, we will strive to make Christ known. Paul said, *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (v.2)*. Why focus on Christ crucified? Christ crucified is a shameful story to a religious world. People want a God who is mighty, powerful, majestic. People shun a God who appears to be weak. And what is weaker than dying on a cross at the hands of wicked soldiers and religious fanatics?

But we know that the cross is the amazing wisdom of God. *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:18-21)*.

Tell, declare that wonderful testimony of God's grace of salvation through Christ—but not with *lofty speech or human wisdom*. How would you respond to this testimony? "When the total depravity of the human race was revealed to me, I determined that I must pursue reconciliation with the offended Creator based on the teleological argument. Believing in ontological quality I accepted the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit made possible through the hypostatic union of God the Son. Embracing the doctrine of particular redemption, I embraced God's plan of regeneration through penal substitution." We would say, "Get real!"

Far better is the testimony of a simple man who desired to join a local church. When the elders asked for his testimony of salvation the man said, "I was a sinner running as fast as I could away from God and into sin, when Jesus ran up behind me and tackled me."

While we declare our dependence on God, we must determine to demonstrate Holy Spirit power (vv.3-4). That might come across as not being very macho. Physical weakness is okay for God's servants. Paul admitted, *And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom (vv.3-4a)*. It is acceptable to realize that we are mere humans dealing with divine supernatural truths. We are incapable of convincing any sinner to become a saint. Recognizing our limitations in a spiritual battle on the enemy's turf can make us tremble.

In contrast to human strength and wisdom, demonstration of Holy Spirit power is expected from God's servants. Paul refused to focus on human wisdom but spoke *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (v.4b)*. What is the demonstration of the Spirit? Consider the description of the Spirit's fruit. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:22-24)*. Living like that makes us obviously distinct. When we declare the truth about Christ, the Holy Spirit uses that truth to convict the hearers of sin. Jesus promised regarding the Holy Spirit: *"And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8)*. His work is supernatural.

### **Our Faith Rests in God's Power (2:5).**

While declaring our dependence on God, we must avoid faith in human wisdom. Paul refused to impress with human wisdom, *that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (v.5a)*. Consider the character of our times. Satan has worked systematically and consistently to dismantle faith in God and His Word in this nation. As you know, our forefathers came to the shores of New England (as they chose to call it) for the express purpose of worshiping God freely. God blessed their efforts and created an unusual nation that He used for three hundred years to propagate the wonderfully good news of the gospel throughout the world. But Satan has been systematically dismantling faith in God and His Word so that now he has unleashed

all the powers of hell against faith in America. Not only is there no pushback to Satan's work, but the most influential powers of the culture gladly join in his attack. Let a significant public figure appeal to the Bible and watch the hordes of hell's goblins and rejects stir up all kinds of attacks and ridicule.

How do we respond? We must conclude that faith in God cannot stand on human wisdom. Faith in God is complete trust in what God says. What God says is revealed in the Bible—the book human wisdom hates and rejects. No wonder that more often than not, faith in God and faith in the king are polar opposites.

In the end, we depend on God. Paul refused to impress with human wisdom but declared dependence on God *in the power of God* (v.5). We must depend on the truth we find revealed in the Bible. It is true that God reveals His power in nature and circumstances. But all such displays must be interpreted by the truth of His Word.

When we depend on God's power, we endure changes. Political upheaval may well be on our horizon. If so, we will not be the first generation of God's people to live through serious political change. Consider our forefathers who endured the War Between the States when businesses were lost, farms burned, church buildings destroyed, families decimated. And God's people survived. Consider the sacrifice of our forefathers who left all in Europe to come to these shores to worship God freely. And what about the periods of persecution Christians endured throughout history and continue to endure? We survive through full dependence on God.

I believe we are living in a most significant time and that one of two things will probably occur in my lifetime. Either we will witness the Lord's return in my lifetime, or we will witness a major international shift of power with America either imploding because of sin and wickedness within or exploding because of attack from powers without. Either way, I desire to trust the Author of the nations and kings. I desire to be wholly dependent on Him who gives me physical life, the meaning of life, and eternal life. Let's not be shy to make a Declaration of Dependence.