

## *From the Pastor's Pen*

In a few days we will celebrate the Fourth of July, our nation's anniversary of our declaration of independence from England.

In celebration, some will gather with family for a barbecue, and many will go to a park to watch a fireworks display.

I suspect that all Americans like to think of themselves as free, and most Americans view themselves as proponents of human freedom.

Isn't it ironic that when we actually view our United States history, that it shows a somewhat different perspective? For example it took us 89 years and a civil war to put into practice what we knew in our hearts was true, and penned in writing in our letter to the King of Great Britain in 1776.

*"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."*

As much as we strive to hold to a noble ideal, we too often find ourselves falling short of those ideals! I suppose that this is because we lack the power to live up to our own ideals.

It seems to be equally evident that no matter how lofty and noble our ideals are, if left to ourselves we are dismal failures at living out those convictions.

Did you know that Apostle Paul challenged the church in Galatia to live out what we might call the American Ideal? Listen, this actually sounds like an address that one of Presidential Leaders might have said in one of their "State of the Union" addresses.

*"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." Galatians 5:13-15*

Well, I agree it might be a little too preachy for a politician, but none the less we are often called upon to live out our convictions. We have to ask ourselves, why would Apostle Paul call for such a challenge if it seems that we cannot live up to our own noble ideals? I think Saint Paul did this because he knew something that I know as well.

Have I got great news for you lovers of free nations and noble ideals! God didn't abandon us to ourselves to try to live the Godly life in our own power, or to set the world free on our own! No, He sent His Son to set the nation's captives free!

*John 8:31-36*

*"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

*They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

See you in Church!

*Pastor Tenney*