

Remembering to Not Forget

The United States of America has enjoyed some of the sweetest blessings the world has ever known. We have seen great advancement in technology, medicine and education. America has paved the way in terms of research, science and exploration. It seems that the world has turned to the U.S.A. for leadership in nearly every circumstance.

Along the way, we have known struggle as well. Even in a nation as great as ours, we have made mistakes. Slavery will always be a shame to our country. The story of the Civil War, of brother fighting brother, is not one told without pain. Our treatment of women, minorities and the poor has at times been shameful.

Yet, through it all, America remained great. The reason for our greatness is summed up in one word: freedom. It is our freedom that has made the United States special. We are not perfect and our system is not without fault (it was Winston Churchill who said, "Democracy is the worst system devised by the wit of man, except for all the others"), but we have been blessed.

Our freedom has paved the way to countless blessings. However, freedom is not easy and it is absolutely costly. Dwight Eisenhower once said that "History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid". It takes courage to stand up and fight for freedom. Franklin Roosevelt reminded our nation that "In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved". Our country's freedom was paid for by the blood of countless heroes who laid down their lives for our nation and it has been maintained by thousands of brave men and women throughout our nations 231 years.

We would do well to remember that our freedom not only brings joy, but comes with responsibility. Alan Keyes once said, "Freedom is first of all a responsibility before the God from whom we come." It is up to us to be wise stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us. You see, though freedom was accomplished through the blood and lives of soldiers, it ultimately has been granted to us by God. Indeed, "every good and perfect comes from above" (James 1:17).

So, how are we doing as stewards of this great gift? There are many things that we often hear that remind us of how we should protect our freedom. Citizens need to vote, we need to be active in politics (Tip O'Neil, former Speaker of the House remarked, "All politics is local") and we need to respect our military. All of these are good things to keep in mind. However, I cannot help but wonder if we have forgotten the most important aspect in defending our freedom. I believe we have forgotten to remember. It sounds strange doesn't it?

We do not cherish that which we have forgotten. We simply cannot appreciate that which we do not ponder. So, as our nation celebrates our national Day of Independence, let's not forget to start at the beginning. May we always take time to remember the great gift of freedom that our nation enjoys and may we never forget that it has been paid for by our national heroes, yet bestowed to us by our Almighty God.

Pastor Michael Staton
First Baptist Church of Mustang