

Happiness

Today on "It's a Good Life," I'd like for us to look at the subject of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. You know, the Declaration of Independence is a document proclaiming the independence of the thirteen English colonies in America. The Declaration was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. In it are these words: "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." Unalienable, or inalienable. rights means impossible to take away, not able to be transferred or taken away, in other words, because of being protected by law.

Amendment I says this: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for redress of grievances." We started losing physically life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness when God was taken out of the affairs of man in our generation. Examples of this would be the Bible removed from the schools, prayer, the Book, the Bible removed, not only from the schools but from the church. The blood, the book, the blessed hope, and also we see that it has been removed from the homes of our people in the United States, not everybody but many.

The First Amendment has erected a wall of separation between church and state, but that wall is a one-directional wall. It keeps the government from running the church but it makes sure that Christian principles will always stay in government.

Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, January 1, 1802, in an address to the Danbury Baptists, says, "Do not let anyone claim the tribute of American patriotism if they ever attempt to remove Christianity or religion from politics."

George Washington, from his farewell address to the nation, said, "Man may be able to change some things on this Earth, but man can never change what God has for those who place their trust in Him."

Unalienable or inalienable rights, impossible to take away, not able to be transferred or taken away because of being protected by law. But it's sad that man, once again, has done things to change the law to take away these rights, and according to the Word of God and according to our founding fathers, this is totally wrong. But thank God, He never changes. Saved people are protected by His law. He does not take away what He has given.

I'm sure you've heard this before. If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

It is true that God wants all of us to have these three wonderful gifts, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Man may try to take it away, but God says, "I want to give it." Well, God gives life and we see that it's not only life, but God gives everlasting life. A familiar verse is John 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten*

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 5:24: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

That's the law of God. He gives life. He not only gives everlasting life, but God gives abundant life, according to John 10:10. It says there: *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* That's Jesus Christ speaking.

God not only gives us everlasting life and abundant life, God gives abundant grace. Romans 5:17 says: *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.*

We also see that God gives abundant pardon. Isaiah 55:7 says: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Isaiah 1:18 says: *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

God also gives us joy, II Corinthians 8:2: *How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.* In II Peter 1, it says: *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

The seven ages of man... spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills are what makes up man's life. Let me say it again. Spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, and wills. And that seems to wrap up man's life, but God wants to give us everlasting life, abundant life. He gives us abundant grace, abundant pardon, abundant joy, and a grand entrance into His kingdom.

Now, as we look further, we see that God not only gives life, He gives and offers liberty. Jesus Christ was sent into the world to proclaim liberty to the captives, according to Isaiah 61:1. You say, "Well, that's in the Old Testament. I thought that the New Testament is what we go by as Christians." Well, you can't take one without the other. The old Testament is the Word of God, the same as the New Testament. If you study, you'll find that much of the Old Testament is quoted in the new.

In Isaiah 61:1, it says, *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Bound by sin, bound by what we were placed in from the first man, Adam. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." Jesus sets us free from that. We are all captives of sin, servants of sin, before Jesus sets us free.

In John 8:34, it says, *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* In John 8:36, it says, *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And He wants to make everyone free in this world. Thank God, when we trust Christ as our

personal Savior, we can say, "Christ hath made us free indeed."

In Galatians 5:1, it says, *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Jesus Christ was sent into the world to free us from sin. Romans 6:18 says, *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* Read also if you would Romans 6:22 and Romans 8:2 in conjunction. To be free from sin, Christ came into the world for that.

He also came into the world to free us from Satan. Colossians 1:12-13 says, ¹²*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* Jesus Christ, God, not only offers us life; He offers us liberty. We must take it in order to be free.

Peter Marshall before the US Senate... and this happened some time ago... said it ever so well in a prayer many years ago. He said, "Lord Jesus, Thou who art the way, the truth, and the life, hear us as we pray for the truth that shall make us all free. Teach us that liberty is not only to be loved but also to be lived. Liberty is too precious a thing to be buried in books. It costs too much to be hoarded. Help us to see that liberty is not the right to do as we please, but the opportunity to please to do what is right." I wonder how many people could stand in the US Senate and pray a prayer like that. I would say it's outlawed today because of man. Man has taken away liberty, but God promises liberty through Jesus Christ.

God not only offers us life and liberty; he offers us happiness. Proverbs 16:20 says, *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and*

whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he. And Jesus said, *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,* John 13:17. And that old song, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

Where is happiness? We know happiness comes from Jesus, but where is happiness? Happiness is in wisdom, according to the Bible. Proverbs 3:13 says, *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding.* Proverbs 3:18 says, *She is a tree of life... this is wisdom... to them that lay hold upon her and happy is every one that retaineth her.* And Proverbs 1:7 says, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Happiness is also in mercy and truth. Proverbs 3:3-4 says, ³*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. ⁴So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.* Well, where do mercy and truth meet? Thank God, they met. Mercy and truth met on the cross of Calvary. Happiness is in the Lord, according to Proverbs 3:5-6.

Do you know Christ as your Savior today? Do you have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Are you pursuing happiness today? In this country we live in, we may not experience that with our government, but we can experience that through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by saying, "Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior." Trust Him today and He'll save you.

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.