

"INALIENABLE RIGHTS!"

(Roger Bruner)

Today, July 4, 2023 is the 247th commemoration of America's independence from Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence framed by the founders contains the following statement: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". This language acknowledges that these inalienable rights are from God. An 'inalienable' right is one that cannot be taken away, denied, or transferred to another. All of humanity is endowed with these truths. The Bible declares that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were what God purposed for man from eternity. God was the source of all life (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16). Let us consider:

HOW DID LIFE BEGIN? God 'spoke' life into existence. "Then God said..." is a repeated phrase in Genesis 1. We read, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host...he spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:6, 9). Life not only began according to God's word, but life also continues according to God's word (cf. Psalm 147:15).

WHEN DID LIFE BEGIN?

- Job 10:11 – You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews.
- Psalm 119:73a – Your hands made me and fashioned me.
- Psalm 139:13 – You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.
- Ecclesiastes 11:5 – Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.
- Isaiah 44:24 – Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb.

The inalienable aspect of life, liberty, and happiness does not mean that man is free of any obligation to God. God gave man understanding for one reason; that he might, "...learn Your commandments." (Psalm 119:73b). The passages above make it clear that life exists both in and out of the womb. Man should thus value life as God defined life.

These inalienable rights are visible through things that God has established. For example, God's love for us has a visible manifestation: His Son given as a sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16). Our inalienable rights exist through three God-ordained institutions: the government, the home (marriage), and the church.

GOVERNMENT: The purpose for Government (i.e., rule) is to uphold justice (cf. Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; and 1 Peter 2:13). Earthly rulers were purposed to be a blessing (cf. Exodus 18:21; 23:8, Deuteronomy 16:9, 2 Chronicles 19:5-10, and Acts 6:3). Government represents authority, and all humanity has the inalienable right to be governed by honest and righteous leaders. Their selection (or election) is by choice, but again, each choice for earthly authority will be in line with individual attitudes toward God's authority. God condemns perversion of justice (cf. 1 Samuel 8:1-3; Isaiah 10:2; Amos 5:12). The only person God declared fit for leadership and rule was one who would uphold justice equally.

MARRIAGE/HOME: "...from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them" (Mark 10:6). God ordained the marriage relationship for man's benefit and God alone has the right to legislate it. (cf. Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-31; Hebrews 13:4). Neither individuals nor governments are at liberty to disregard, redefine, or restrict any human from this blessed right. It is an inalienable right from the Creator. That governments, families, and the church suffer from a failure to honor God's will on marriage is evident. Life, liberty, and happiness are dependent upon obedience to God (Genesis 2:16-17).

CHURCH: Authority over all things pertaining to the church (its work, worship, and oversight) belongs to Jesus (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18-20). Authority can be delegated only as God hath decreed. Jesus was given all authority after His resurrection (John 17:2). Jesus then delegated authority to the apostles (John 17:6-8). All that they 'bound on earth' had already been bound from heaven (Matthew 16:19). When any man or government makes declarations regarding human rights, those declarations must be in accordance with God's will. (1 Peter 4:16).

SALVATION TERMS: Because God "...foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself..." (Ephesians 1:5); His will should be received, not challenged (John 1:12). God has been very clear how to respond to His offer of salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:17-18; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:20-21).

WORSHIP: God alone is worthy of being worshiped (cf. Psalm 148). He has the right to accept or refuse worship (Deuteronomy 12:29-32; Malachi 1:6-8; John 4:24; Colossians 2:18, 20-23).

JUDGMENT: God “hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.” (John 5:22-23). God has the authority to deal justly with disobedience (Romans 12:19). Our judgments must honor and respect His judgments (John 7:24).

It is only in the acceptance of God’s oracles that we have freedom from sin as an inalienable right (John 8:36). Christ gave us freedom from sin, not liberty to sin (1 John 1:5-10). Let us, “Live as free men, yet without using your freedoms as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God.” (1 Peter 2:16).