

Independence Day

The truest celebration of freedom is experienced by those who celebrate as sojourners in the land, liberated by Christ, and looking forward to their promised eternal home.



Hebrews 13:14; 1 Peter 2:11; Galatians 5:1; John 8:31-36

July 5, 2020

(Hebrews 13:14) ¹⁴ For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

(1 Peter 2:11) ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

(Galatians 5:1) ¹ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

(John 8:31-36) ³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ 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?" ³⁴ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

COMMUNITY – CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

- How would you explain why Americans celebrate the Fourth of July to someone from another country?
- In what sense are Americans free? In what sense would you say many Americans are still in bondage?
- Would you say you are enjoying true freedom in Christ the way He intends for you to? Why or why not?

CONTENT – EXPLORING GOD'S STORY

Have a volunteer read Hebrews 13:14

- What is the city we anticipate? How does knowing our ultimate destination impact our perspective about the place we live right now?
- The Hebrews who received this letter did not have many of the freedoms we celebrate in America. They were losing their businesses and property, they were being bullied, and some of their Christian friends had been martyred for their faith. How would this verse have encouraged them? How would this passage have challenged them, given the cultural climate?
- Notice the verb "seek" in verse 14. What are some ways you are seeking the city to come? How does your life demonstrate a focus on Jesus and His eternal kingdom?

Have two volunteers read 1 Peter 2:11 and Galatians 5:1

- For what reason did Peter say we are all still at war?
- What did both Peter (1 Peter 2:11) and Paul (Gal. 5:1) indicate we must do to have victory in that war?
- In what way does seeing ourselves as sojourners and exiles in this land help us stand firm in freedom and not submit again to the slavery of sin?

Have a volunteer read John 8:31-36

- How did Jesus' listeners misunderstand what He was offering? How was their concept of "freedom" different from His?
- In addition to the illusion of salvation through ancestry, what else does the truth of Jesus free a person from?
- What do you think Jesus meant by the words "free indeed"? How does Jesus offer freedom beyond even living in a free country?

COMMISSION – ENGAGING IN GOD'S STORY

- What needs to happen in order for you to be "free indeed"? What enslaving sin do you need to seek freedom from?
- How can this group help one another reject the pursuit of empty "freedom" and pursue true freedom found only in Christ?
- How do we encourage others to seek true freedom through sharing the gospel?

PRAYER: Thank God for the promise of an eternal home and the way that impacts our perspective and behavior as we live as sojourners in this land. Ask Him to help you experience true freedom in Jesus. Invite His Spirit to reveal the areas where you are pursuing false forms of freedom. Ask that He would empower you to resist these temptations and pursue true freedom in Him.