

42-04-01.wpd—Declaring Dependence Day

July 4th, freedom, national problems

Luke 4:14-21

The freedoms of independence depend on someone paying the price.

INTRODUCTION: (read **text**)

–**July 4th** doesn't celebrate Independence Day but our *Declaration of Independence*. Our freedom as a self-governing nation was proclaimed that day, but it was purchased by the blood, sweat and tears that followed. **John Adams** told his wife Abigail after he signed it: "I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these states; yet, through all the gloom I can see the rays of light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means." Our forefathers paid a dear price to make their promise good, and the liberty we enjoy today depended on their very costly sacrifice.

–**HOM.idea.** Liberty is *costly*, and enjoying it depends on those who *purchase* it (**title**). When **George Bernard Shaw** called "Independence ...[a]... middle class blasphemy..., [saying that] *We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth,*" he was right.

–Jesus made a declaration of freedom in **v.18-19** of **our text**, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus was quoting an OT promise of freedom for God's people. He proclaimed that the fulfillment of this promise depended on Him. Jesus went on to declare Himself as the One sent to pay for that freedom.

I. Political integrity collapses without spiritual integrity.

- A. Our greatest problem in the world, in America or in our individual lives is independence from God (both in word and in behavior)—Prov 14:34, Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- B. Where has America gone wrong? "**Teddy**" **Roosevelt** said: "Americanism means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity and hardihood—the virtues that made America. The things that will destroy America are prosperity-at-any-price, peace-at-any-price, safety-first (instead of duty-first), the love-of-soft-living, and the get-rich-quick theory of life."

America's **greatest plight** is forgetting and losing the freedoms that were proclaimed and paid for by Jesus Christ, BUT, having lost them, her **greatest hope** is to remember them and to reclaim them.

TRANS: Why do ungrateful atheists forget that their freedoms of

thought and speech were won for them by our religious forefathers! Why are modern public schools silent and even dishonest about the religious principles on which this nation was founded? **Noah Webster** declared the truth when he wrote: "The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles.... This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free constitutions of government. // No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."

II. Personal Poverty is the Target of Christ's Preaching

- A. Jesus said in **v.18a**, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me..." He was directed by the Holy Spirit in what to say and to whom He was to say it (Jesus often told us, "Follow Me!" – but to do that, we also must be "anointed" by the Spirit, and we can be!)
 1. The Holy Spirit *anoints* us "to preach the good news" [Gk, evangelize].
 2. Before telling *the good news*, the Spirit often points out *the bad news* of our personal spiritual poverty. (It is "*the poor*" who need to embrace the good news, even if they don't see their poverty):
 - a. "I'm not really that much of a sinner!" (Ever hear an unwed mother say, "But I'm just a little pregnant."?– Rom 3:23, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God / Rom 6:23a, the wages of sin is death. What if an ER doctor told a family, "Your loved one is dead, but only a little bit dead.") All sinners are spiritually poor and need the new life Jesus offers!
 - b. "Doesn't God love me just as I am?"– Yes, but He loves us too much to let us stay the way we are!" (God's tells us the truth: **first the bad news**, "You're headed in the direction of hell!" **But then**, the **good news**: "I can set you on the road to heaven!")
 - c. "But, I've got everything: what more do I need?" (Human values fall short of God's values. [A rich man, awakened by the death angel, was warned to set his house in order, because he would soon die. The man pleaded that, if only he could take along a suitcase packed with anything he wanted, he would will his entire estate to charity. The angel checked with God, and the request was granted. But St. Peter stopped him at heaven's gate, saying, "You can't take that in." The man replied, "I got divine permission to bring whatever I could carry in this suitcase." "That's interesting," Peter remarked. "Let's see what you brought." When he opened it, it was lined with bars of solid gold. Peter laughed, "Pavement! You brought pavement?"] God wants to make us truly rich with the

treasure of a holy life free from sin and self-centeredness.

- B. Only those who really see their plight (“*the prisoners...the blind...the oppressed*” of v.18) will listen to and receive the “good news.”
1. “*freedom for the prisoners*” means moving from a tight little prison cell into the immense Kingdom of God, not as a slave but as a royal family member— John 8:34-36, 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.
 2. “*recovery of sight for the blind*” means having our dark understanding enlightened with divine glory— 2 Cor 4:4,6, The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.... For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
 3. Jesus came “*to release the oppressed,*” because God wants to give us true freedom to be who we were created to be. (Oppression has many masks, but underneath it is one person 's will dominating another's— Rom 12:2 (Phillips), Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity. [Nature glorifies God automatically. Humans glorify God only by *freely* choosing to do His will.]

CONCLUSION:

–[In a small note found on the body of a young soldier killed in Viet Nam, a message was written to his 9-month-old daughter Amanda, whom he never got to see. Though hardly legible, the last words were clearly preserved: “*Amanda, I love you. Love God and listen to your mother, and don't ever forget or take for granted the incredible price that was paid for your freedom in America.*”] **The freedoms of**

independence depend on someone paying the price.

– In v.19, Jesus proclaimed “*the year of the Lord's favor,*” that coming time of freedom from sin, from false thinking, from sickness and demon-oppression. But the payment of the promise depended on Him. He had to purchase those freedoms for us by His death on the Cross. God not only wants us to know about those freedoms purchased for us through Christ, He wants us to enjoy them today and forever.

Luke 4:14-21 (NIV)

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.

17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him,

21 and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”