

Bryan Hixson: 6/10/21
“Acting on Independence”

For what would you be willing to give up your job, your car, or your home? For what would you be willing to leave your country with none of your personal belongings and no knowledge of when you might return, if at all? For what would you be willing to give up your life or that of your child? If you could only feed one of your children, which one would you feed?

Each and every day in our world these types of questions are faced as most of us reading this enjoy the blessing of freedom and the relative wealth that freedom has generated. For most of us, we enjoy our wealth and independence while also taking them for granted. We burn money in the form of fireworks. For what I might spend on a single package of firecrackers someone else in our world could feed their extended family for the day. I love a celebratory evening with fireworks in a context of recognized sacrifice, appreciated blessing, and subsequent action.

I believe that most accept the recognition and appreciation element of independence, but the response portion is another question. Those of us who live in spiritual and physical freedom and independence have a gift to be given. That gift can be given in many forms. Perhaps it begins with teaching our children about physical and spiritual freedom. It means helping their celebration have a context beyond a day for burgers, homemade ice cream, and watermelon at the beach, lake, or pool. That gift can come in blessing others through that which we've been blessed. It may be a gift of charity, love, service, or compassion. That decision is ours to make alone, remembering that others answered questions posed above by sacrificing their life for ours ultimately providing our freedom and independence. That sacrifice calls us to act, not just to celebrate. Jesus' sacrifice and ultimate victory likewise call us to celebrate and act.

Having been blessed to witness the celebrations of the recent historical liberation in Rwanda makes me reflect on our nation's response to freedom and independence. I observed the citizens of Rwanda acting in profound ways because of their independence and wonder at times if we have forgotten what we celebrate and what that should provoke in us both individually and collectively.

As Christians, our greatest freedom is that which is found in Christ and that which many choose to ignore or scoff. The removal of “God” from a coin, a courthouse, or a pledge may happen, but God will not be removed from the hearts of His people who continue to recognize that spiritual freedom is only His to give and ours to accept and act upon. May we as those who celebrate our freedom in Christ, find it in ourselves to recognize sacrifice, appreciate blessing, and take meaningful action as we soon celebrate our nation's independence.