

## Declaring Our Independence 1 Peter 3:8

Thomas Jefferson, back when our country was founded, declared in the Declaration of Independence a list of “God-given” & “unalienable rights” which included the right to pursue “Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness”

From the dawn of our country, these rights have been the building blocks of what’s become the “American Dream”, that we can live the life we choose, we are free to..., & we can go after the things that make for a fulfilling life!

These rights become very real for our graduates upon graduation!

Thomas Jefferson gave us an idea, an ideal, to live for. But what about God? Does God have anything to say about the life we ought to pursue with the freedom He has won for us? – A declaration of our independence in Christ

There is a problem with the Jeffersonian ideal. It often leads to a life of chasing after the wrong things and discovering that what we thought would make us happy has actually left us empty! Examples:

*“The sad reality is that such things are merely a temporary rush that falls far short of the genuine good life that really satisfies the heart.” - MacArthur*

Thankfully, God gives us another alternative! There’s a different kind of life, with a different kind of freedom, that produces a different kind of meaning & joy to our lives! & this life is open to all of us, even those w/out a degree!

We have seen over these last several weeks of sermons a glimpse into this different kind of life that God calls us to. It’s not easy, but it is far better!

**“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind” – 1 Peter 3:8**

This is a reflection of that Godly life! Do you see the “good life” found in it?

- **Unity of mind** – There are few greater things in this life than to find people who you can be like minded with! To experience the closeness of unity, both in heart & mind, is such a gift & blessing from God!

There is a difference between unity and uniformity! It’s not about everyone being the same... it’s about being headed in the same direction!

*Graduates, pursue others who you can be likeminded with in the most*

*important things of life. Pursue those things together & you will be blessed!*

- **Sympathy** – What a true blessing from God to be able to walk with others through the ups & downs, & the joys & sorrows of life!

We were not meant to be alone! Sympathy allows us to connect with others on an emotional level. We’re emotional beings with emotional needs.

When we carry one another’s burdens, God’s Spirit is at work within us, **redeeming the things that have been broken in this world!**

*Graduates, help carry the burdens of those God has placed around you, for through it you too will feel the burdens on your shoulders lifted!*

- **Brotherly love** – When we choose to look at one another as family, we can begin to choose to overlook the things that often separates us!

It’s hard to leave conflicts unresolved with those we live with! There’s no getting away from it/them! How should we respond to those we come in conflict with who we know we will be spending eternity with?

*Graduates, in all stages of life there will be people you come in conflict with. If you chose to respond w/ brotherly love your life will be far less miserable!*

**“To forgive is to set a prisoner free & discover that the prisoner was you!”**

- **A tender heart** – A soft heart towards God and towards others is the fulfillment of God’s greatest commandments!

When we are not in a right standing with God, we will never experience true and lasting joy in this life! We were created to be in relationship with Him, so when that is missing, **our lives will never be complete!**

And when we are not in a right standing with our brothers & sisters, then we are also unable to be in a right standing before God!

- **A humble mind** – God’s Word tells us that **“whoever humbles himself will be exalted!”**

**“Pride goes before destruction, & a haughty spirit before a fall.” – Prov. 16:18**

*Graduates, a tender heart & a humble mind will take you far in this life, but more importantly it will lead you into the next life as well!*

Today’s a declare our independence day, but how will we live out our freedom?

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