

Freedom

What will man risk for freedom? That's an easy question to answer. Life and limb! Consider all the wars that have been fought to procure or protect freedom, even in our own nation's history. Our forefathers pledged their, "lives, fortunes and sacred honor" in their quest for freedom. Freedom is one of man's greatest battles and carries one of our greatest rewards.

As Samuel Adams attempted to call men to fight for freedom, he chided the timid with these immortal words:

If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen. - Samuel Adams, 1776.

The same is true for spiritual freedom. There is a fight to be fought, a war to be won. Paul calls us to "fight the good fight" (I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7). And he teaches us how to prepare for that battle in Ephesians 6:10-19. Peter warns us not to be surprised with the fiery ordeal comes during that battle, (I Peter 4:12-14). Make no mistake, it *is* a battle, and the enemy is powerful. But his power pales compared to God's power working through His faithful soldiers.

Patrick Henry recognized the battlegrounds, physically and spiritually. He famously wrote:

"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Henry also knew the immutable bond between religious freedom, both political freedom of religion **and** an individual's spiritual freedom from sin. A less famous but perhaps even more important quote from Henry is this:

"It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains."

In other words, when we lose freedom from sin, we lose political freedom.

As with Samuel Adams' physical call to physical arms, we must heed God's call to spiritual arms. If you fall from fear or fail from weakness, *"may you crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your (spiritual) chains rest lightly upon you and (to further paraphrase Adams) God will forget that you were our (spiritual) countrymen."*

This Independence Day let us all remember the importance of religious freedom from sin as well as political freedom from king George! That said, let us always remember Patrick Henry's words, ***"It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains."***

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