

**July 5, 2026 Celebrating our Nation's 250th Independence Anniversary: Real Freedom
Matthew 11:25–30 & Romans 7:14–25**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28)

“Who will rescue me from this body...Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25)

Yesterday, July 4th, our nation celebrated 250 years of independence with great fanfare! We are thankful to God for allowing us to be part of witnessing this historic day. The declaration made on that day marked the start of a new experiment in liberty—the freedom to worship, gather, speak, and live without fear of tyranny. However, as we marked this milestone, we must ask a deeper question: **Are we truly free?** Not in a political or social way, but spiritually. Jesus makes a powerful claim: "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." Meanwhile, Paul warns that a nation can have liberty on paper but still be enslaved in spirit. Today, we turn to two passages—one from Jesus and one from Paul—to rediscover what Real Freedom truly means.

Real freedom begins with humility (Matthew 11:25–27)

Jesus begins with a prayer: “You have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.” He’s not attacking intelligence. He’s exposing **self-reliance**. The greatest barrier to freedom is the belief that we can free ourselves. We live in a nation built on the idea of independence, but the kingdom of God is built on **dependence**. Jesus says freedom begins when we come to Godlike children— open, honest, needy, humble.

Real freedom begins when God opens our eyes. Three truths Jesus reveals:

- **We are not self-made.** Everything we have is grace.
- **We are not self-saving.** We cannot free ourselves from sin.
- **We are not self-sustaining.** We need God’s wisdom, God’s strength, God’s mercy.

On this anniversary, we must acknowledge that our greatest threat isn't losing political freedom but losing spiritual vision. Because if spiritual vision becomes blurred, we will give in to our own impulses and be careless about how freedom should be.

True freedom comes through surrender (Matthew 11:28–30). It’s not just about doing whatever we want; it’s about fully submitting to Jesus’ teachings of love and compassion! Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” This is the freedom our nation cannot legislate. This is the freedom no constitution can guarantee.

Jesus offers:

- **Rest for the weary**
- **Relief for the burdened**
- **A yoke that fits**
- **A life that is light**

But notice the paradox: **Freedom comes through a yoke. Rest comes through surrender. Life comes through obedience.** We are not free when we cast off all restraints. We are free when we take on the right restraints— **the yoke of Christ.**

Real freedom requires Truth (Romans 1:15–25). Paul writes to a powerful empire—Rome—celebrating its own greatness. But he exposes a spiritual crisis: “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.” This is the heart of bondage.

Paul describes three exchanges that endanger freedom:

1. **Exchanging truth for lies**
2. **Trading divine glory for images**
3. **Substituting the Creator with created things**

When a nation suppresses truth, it loses its soul. When people worship creation—pleasure, power, prosperity—they lose their purpose. When a society rejects God, it becomes enslaved to its own desires. **Freedom without truth becomes chaos. Freedom without God becomes idolatry. Freedom without righteousness becomes bondage.**

Real freedom is found in the Gospel (Romans 1:16–17)

Paul declares: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.” The gospel is not advice. It is not inspiration. It is not motivation. **It is power. Power to break chains. Power to heal hearts. Power to restore nations.** Political freedom can protect your rights. Economic freedom can expand your opportunities. Social freedom can affirm your dignity. But **only the gospel (the good news of salvation) can free your soul.**

Real freedom produces a new kind of people.

People who rest in Christ—not driven by anxiety, ambition, or comparison.

People who walk in truth—not swayed by lies, trends, or cultural pressure.

People who worship the Creator—not the created.

People who live for God’s glory—not their own.

This is the freedom our nation needs at 250 years. Not just fireworks. Not just parades. Not just patriotic songs. **A return to Christ. A return to truth. A return to the gospel.**

As we celebrate 250 years of independence, Jesus invites us to a deeper independence:

Freedom from sin. Freedom from shame. Freedom from fear. Freedom from self.

He says: “Come to me... and I will give you rest.” Paul says, “The gospel is the power of God.”

Today, let us not only celebrate a nation’s freedom. Let us receive **Christ’s freedom**— the only freedom that lasts forever. **Happy 250th Independence anniversary!**