



July 2009

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It's that time of year again. You know the time of year when summer seems to be in full swing and everybody is free spirited and relaxed. The temperatures are hot and the humidity is even greater. It's the time of vacations, staycations, outdoor fun, baseball, swimming, summer camps, outdoor barbeque activities, family reunions and much, much more. Right in the middle of summer comes the day of Independence or the fourth of July as it is referred to in many circles. This holiday is an

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## PASTOR'S

# Perspective

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important time in the history of America for it celebrates the independence of America from the crown of Great Britain. This freedom was memorialized with the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It is also important in that it reminds Americans of the liberties and freedoms we enjoy as citizens of this democracy. America is a great nation filled with opportunity, though not yet fully equal opportunity. For African Americans and other minorities in this country there is still a "short shrift" when it comes to equal access and opportunity. Even still we enjoy great freedom and of course like most other Americans we will join in celebrating this day of freedom. This year we have pause to celebrate an African American man as President of the United States. Somehow, fireworks, cookouts in the back yard, parades, races, flags waving in the air and community pride will hallmark the day. Even with all of this fanfare there is still some mixed emotions as we celebrate this freedom. For too many of us, we still "ain't free!" But then that's another commentary.

Ah, but do not despair, for there is another sense of freedom and liberty that is available to all of us. Worldly citizenship or validation from a nation such as America plays no role in this freedom and liberty. John, the gospel writer in the 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter of his writing captures for us a

conversation that Jesus had one day with some Jews who believed in Him. Jesus said to them "if you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." He went further to say to these same Jews, "The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." There it is! Through knowing and having relationship with the Son (i.e. of God) a freedom and liberty comes that is not compromised or diminished by the color of one's skin. It is not given out lavishly to some while more conservatively spread upon others. There is no high class or lower class. There is no class, caste or racial stratification under this freedom. For this freedom comes from God through His Son Jesus Christ and it is available to all who would engage it! With it come power, peace, promise and protection. It is hallmarked not by flags, parades, cookouts, fireworks or intense community pride but instead its implement is a simple old rugged cross standing as the imperishable symbol of a FREEDOM THAT WILL NEVER LOOSE ITS POWER.

Enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> but most importantly enjoy the freedom that comes with knowing and living everyday under the promise of a Son whose liberty will never fade!

**HAPPY  
INDEPENDENCE DAY!**