***Matthew 11:25-30 (ESV)***

*[25] At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; [26] yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. [27] All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

**“A Battle Fought For All”**

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. The Fourth of July weekend celebrates the unique character of America. Some nations live in constant revolution never resolving their reason for revolt. Others have their reasons, but few are courageous to make the sacrifice needed. Independence Day for this country takes into account two contrasting events. It was during a time of war when America declared her freedom in words. The chaos created by the Revolutionary War with Great Britain also drove the founding fathers to frame The Declaration of Independence. It was more than “winning” a war for freedom, but making a legal case crafted in words of freedom that stood for America.

 American independence is not the same as the kingdom Christ. The nature of this country still has a freedom founded upon the Law. As the Declaration of the Independence concludes,

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions…”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Governance for this country, as any other, is not without God as the “Supreme Judge” of men. No nation is free from the Laws of life not one. However, what Christ freely declares is salvation for all the nations of a sinful world. As Zechariah the prophet described, “…He shall speak peace to the nations…” Just as freedom was not without war for this country, so true freedom is what Jesus fought for all by the cross. A perfect Savior is for an imperfect people.

 Those who refuse the Savior bring their own death sentence. Rather than a single person, condemnation can also apply to a whole group. This is what Jesus had proclaimed to some of the cities in Galilee. They were a self-sufficient people too prideful to repentant of their ways. Rather than giving glory to Christ who had come. All they could do was worship their works. So we read, “At that time Jesus declared, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.” The wise and understanding were those unable to repent. They only gave one reason after another for their works and ways apart from the justifying Word of God’s Son. The little children were those able to repent. They had no way around God’s judgment just a hopeful promise to believe that Jesus saves sinners.

 America has declared her independence, but we remain an imperfect people. The founding fathers were far from flawless, as many historians note. Many of them owned slaves, others rejected Jesus as God's Son, and none were immune to indecent ways of life. Why has this country received one blessing after another? Was it works of men based on the Law or a freedom humble enough to allow room for religion and with that the preaching of Christ as Savior? Since the government comes by right of the people, then the people are responsible to God’s judgment. No leader, no work, no law, no vote, no amount of money will make a perfect people. Why pick on the state of this when the church stands guilty if not more before God’s Son. As the district president from Rocky Mountain District wrote,

“The church that is comfortable in its nice building or in meeting its budget and does not see the harvest as ready is one that cares only for itself. The church then, as God’s tool for speaking His Word, becomes His biggest headache. And this church loses its prophetic voice to its community and country” (The Lutheran Clarion Vol. 3, Issue 6).

We are to repent of our false wisdom and understanding that fights so much with what God says by His Word. The Father reveals His love not for the independent, but the helpless who hear the preaching of Christ.

Jesus is the perfect Savior for an imperfect people. He said, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” There are no limits, restrictions, or prejudice in Christ. He is the savior of the nations. This is what frustrated the Pharisees and Jews. They were the people and Nation of God’s Law. Yet, the Law demands perfection, which none could uphold no matter how they want to make it appear. As St. Paul fully admits even as an apostle, “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14). Only God coming in flesh and blood born of the Virgin Mary took upon a humanity that would not fail the Law. Instead, it reveals Him to be the true Son of the Father. What sinful man cannot imagine is how God works salvation exclusively by His Son. It is a war waged for all by the suffering and death of Christ. In Him, forgiveness, life and salvation freely abound. Without Him, the Law brings guilt, God is dead, and salvation has no security.

 As much as we are a free people in America, the Law still has its way with us. Where lawlessness increases, so do the lawyers. Today, there is one attorney for every 250 people in this country. Let alone, there seems to be a regulation for everything. Some even want to regulate family life from how to raise children to what a person should eat. We cannot live with the Law and yet we certainly cannot live without it. This proves Jesus perfectly fought a battle that we could never win. His case before the Law is without sin and He uses His life to take our place on the cross. Complete lawlessness by sinful men fell upon Jesus just as complete justice came from the Holy Law of God. Here is the truth. God’s love has limits. They are in the perfect man Jesus Christ. The Law only gets tighter for those trying to seek refuge in it, while the Savior set us free by His sacrifice to serve Him without fear. This good news is a gift Christ chooses to give to anyone. It is for the freest nations in the world as much as for the most suppressed. This exclusive work from God is a promise made in baptism, a life of forgiveness heard by absolution, and a salvation hidden in the preaching of His Word.

 Jesus is the perfect Savior for an imperfect people. You have sinned against the Law and yet Christ hides nothing from you saying, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." What bursts out from Christ is to come, take, and learn from Him. He welcomes those burdened by their sin and who feel the Law’s judgment. He offers His cross as the yoke of victory held within our life. He teaches rest for the soul by His Word, even when the body must suffer with many battles both within and without. All guilt of sin, fear of death, and power of the Devil give way to the death and risen triumph of the Savior. Luther states,

“If you are heavy-laden and feel your weakness, go joyfully to the sacrament and receive refreshment, comfort and strength. If you wait until you are rid of your burden in order to come to the sacrament purely and worthily, you must stay away from it forever” (Tappert 455:73).

The perfect freedom for the nations of the world is the perfect redeemer Jesus Christ. While the sloppiness of works is at war in the world in both the church and state, God declares His Word for humanity to make room for His Son. He has fought the battle for all. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, Amen.

1. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\_transcript.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)