

## Fact vs. Fiction

Are you looking forward to celebrating our American Independence on Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>? No? You are celebrating on July 4<sup>th</sup>? Why?

Officially, the Continental Congress declared its freedom from Great Britain on July 2, 1776, when it voted to approve a resolution submitted by delegate Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, declaring “That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

If we declared our independence on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, why on earth do we celebrate Independence Day on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?? Well, July 2<sup>nd</sup> was a Saturday. The vote happened late enough in the day that the next newspapers that were printed did not come out until Monday- July 4<sup>th</sup>. So, while the vote happened on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the news did not really reach the public until July 4<sup>th</sup>- and that is when the people celebrated and it is still the date we celebrate today. If we waited until the declaration was actually signed, we would be celebrating in August!

History is not the only thing that people sometimes get wrong. It can happen in faith matters too. One of the biggest myths and falsehoods that many people, even life-long believers sometimes get wrong is that they can somehow earn their way into Heaven. People tend to believe that if they are “good enough” that God will reward their good deeds with a spot in Heaven. Fortunately for us, that idea is a myth as none of us are sinless or could ever earn a place in paradise.

This is of course where Jesus comes in. He saw us in our hopeless condition, stuck in sin, and did what only he could do. He stepped out of Heaven, was born as a sinless human child, lived a perfect life and then took on the sins of the world and paid the price for that sin on a Roman cross. He defeated death so that we would not be defeated by it.

Our good works are not a way of earning Heaven, but of thanking Jesus and giving glory to Him for he has done. As we read in Ephesians 2:8-9, “ for it is by grace that we have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works so that no one may boast.”

As you celebrate July 2<sup>nd</sup>, or July 4<sup>th</sup>, and think about freedom, remember that it is through Jesus, and only Jesus, that we have freedom from sin. Thank you, Jesus for your great gift!

*Dear Jesus – Thank you for the freedom from sin that I now enjoy through faith in you. Help me to share the good news that “good enough” is not good enough and that the only way to Heaven is through you. Amen*

*~ Eric Gerken | Director of Family & Youth Ministry*

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