

## July 4th: Seeking God for Liberty in Times of Masks and Division

Even this summer, July 4th Independence Day, is centered between [June 19th, Juneteenth](#), and August 28th, I HAVE A DREAM DAY. This summer is no different; yet everything is different. Each of these days was once a much anticipated holiday; a monthly celebration denoting a cry for freedom and liberty.

Meanwhile this year, as we approach Independence Day, the festivities along with the quest for a "perfect union" will be marred by face masks and social distancing. Yet, our hearts should remain hopeful. Can we dare to celebrate the aspirations that as American people we can live together, prosper together, and grow together in liberty and justice?

Admittedly, these aspirations for our nation have yet to encompass the rights of all American people; especially those in the womb, those oppressed by the yoke of skin color racism, and other human barriers. However, Hope is still alive. [We are not colorblind](#); we are not separate races. We just need to learn to see and hear each other.

There is hope that the imperfect union can still become a perfect union; one race, one blood, one nation under God. As we move forward, we must remember that as the human race, we are all made in the image of God.

"And hath made of one blood all nations of [humans] to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation..." Acts 17:26

In the midst of COVID-19, race riots, and desecration of our communities, we must remember that we are human beings, flawed sinners capable both of great evil and extraordinary righteousness. Every one of us, from our founding fathers and mothers to all of us alive today at this perilous moment in our nation; we are all in the same boat.

"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." -- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today, our union that started out as a brave experiment is still unfolding. Yet our grand hopes are in grave danger right now. We are challenged not only by a global pandemic that is sickening and killing more people every day, with an end we cannot predict; we are also facing a social upheaval the likes of which many alive today have never seen.

Yes, we have been ravaged before. The Civil War. The Civil Rights Movement. The Vietnam War protests; all of these have stretched the fabric of our nation. Yet we are still here.

Those challenges made us stronger, better. I hope and pray we can withstand our current challenges; but we won't without God's help. One way to seek God's help is to [return to God](#).

Meanwhile, I'm praying that we can redirect our obsession with statues, and focus on seeking God for a way out of our distress.

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Several years ago, when a statue of my uncle, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was to be dedicated, I told my family I wasn't sure I could be there. I loved and revered my uncle, the man, but I would not worship his statue.

Today it still pains me to watch angry people, many of them driven by emotion, unaware of history, tearing down statues as if that's an answer to our problems. And it pains me to know that our First Amendment rights to free speech are being trampled by a politically motivated Twitter mob that decides what sentiments can be spoken and which must be stifled. The extremism of our newly anointed "cancel culture" is often overwhelming.

While it is sobering to consider that while we are breathing behind masks, and keeping socially distant from each other, we need to find ways to reconnect. Yes, we have political differences, but we are all Americans. Surely that's a common connection worth celebrating.

We can relearn civility. We can remember that we can disagree without destroying the world around us.

South Africa is finding its way back from apartheid. Rwanda is recovering from genocide. Surely the U.S. can trust God to strengthen the resolve of a people still committed to praying for forming that more perfect union envisioned centuries ago.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV