

My Country 'Tis of Thee

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

“My Country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside
Let freedom ring.”

I'm still singing it! I hope you are as well. With Memorial Day behind us and the Fourth of July approaching, we should remember to thank God for our country and the freedoms we have in America. Ephesians 5:20 says, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This means I can give thanks to God for our country today. I thank God for the independence we do have from foreign invaders. Even Jesus agreed that “a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11:21). I am thankful for every person who risks his life for me and for the sake of our freedoms in this country. We ought to let them know in a greater way, especially at this time of the year, how much we appreciate them. Galatians 6:10 says, “As we have therefore

opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

I am also thankful for the independence we have in regards to religious freedom and worship. There are many today in distant lands who are severely persecuted for the Christian faith and who are facing grave danger for their stand for Christ. This was true in the past and even the present. 1 Thessalonians 2:14, “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.” In a similar way, we can suffer persecution from our “own countrymen” when this nation forgets its historical foundations, purposes, and freedoms. May this never happen in our country based upon the Declaration of Independence and what this country stands for as a republic.

A famous line of The Declaration of Independence reads: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress, the legislature of the American colonies, voted for independence from Great Britain. It then appointed a committee of five - John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston - to draft a formal statement of independence designed to influence public opinion at home and abroad. The Declaration of Independence was the public act that took place in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. Church bells rang over Philadelphia on July 4, 1776 signaling that the Declaration of Independence was approved and officially adopted by the Continental Congress. The Second Continental Congress, consisting of representatives of the thirteen colonies, declared that the thirteen colonies in North America were to be free and independent of England. July 4, 1776, was the official birthday of our country. It marked the beginning of our independence.

We should give thanks for our freedoms as a nation, pray for our leaders, and also pray that we might maintain the peace and liberties we have in this country. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 is addressed to Christians, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all

godliness and honesty.” One reason for praying for our countries leaders is so we, as Christians, might lead a quiet and peaceable life. In short, it is for our own good and benefit that the government should remain stable and that the country be preserved from revolution, civil war, turmoil, and anarchy. Today, I thank God for the Declaration of Independence, the birth of this nation, and the freedom we have in this country. As truly born again Christians, let us give thanks to the Lord and continue to pray for freedom and liberty. Freedom is a wonderful gift from God (James 1:17) and let us never forget it.

“Our fathers’ God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom’s holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.
Amen.”