



Christian Report

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Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

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.

Our Declaration of Independence acknowledges that the unalienable rights spoken of were bestowed upon us by no government, but by God Himself. Let us look more closely at these rights and how the Bible demonstrates that these rights are indeed the gift of God. But first, let's explore the word "Unalienable" since it is not as commonly used today as it was in 1776.



Unalienable rights. What does Unalienable mean?

- Inalienable: incapable of being alienated, surrendered, or transferred
- Unalienable: impossible to take away or give up
- Alien - belonging to another (example: an alien – as someone from another planet.)
- Alienable - something you can give away
- Unalienable - opposite cannot give away

Inalienable - most often used today but the word "Unalienable" is the word used in the Declaration of Independence.

There you have it. These rights belong to us; they are inherently ours. They cannot be transferred, surrendered, or given away.

Now let's look at the rights acknowledged by our wonderful Declaration.

Life

Jesus came to give us Life and preach the Gospel (Good

News) to the Poor. Luke 4:18-19 (NASB) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Jesus gives us Life in Relationship with God. John 14:6 (NASB) "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

Jesus gives us Life Eternal. John 11:25-26 (NASB) "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die...'"

Liberty

Jesus came to give us Liberty. Luke 4:18 (NASB) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed..."

Luke 4:18 (KJV 1900) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..."

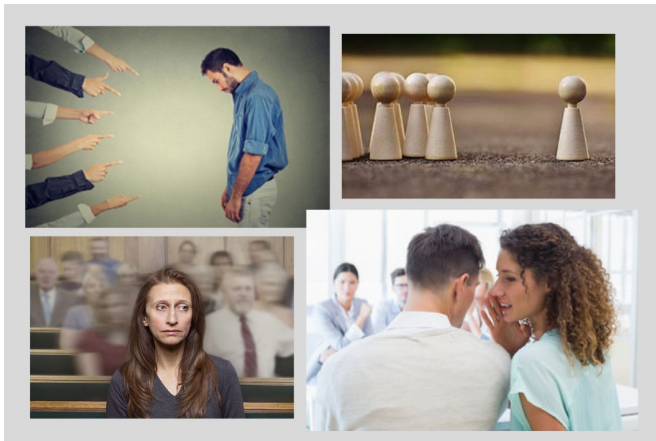
Jesus gives us Freedom from Fear. Hebrews 2:14-15 (NASB) "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Jesus gives us Freedom from the bondage of Sin. Romans 6:22-23 (NASB) "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Freedom from the consequences of Sin, including Separation from God and eternal Death. Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." Romans 3:23 "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

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As I shared in an earlier writing, as hard as fellowship can be, we are told in Hebrews 10:25 to not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. The third reason for fellowship we will discuss is *restoration*.



Sometimes we are afraid to draw into a healthy congregation because we're afraid that they'll judge us for our sin. In fact, too many congregations today shy away from sin because they don't understand a few things; like the difference between judgment, condemnation, and conviction.

Judgment is knowing right from wrong and labeling those rights and wrongs correctly. It's calling that which is good 'good' and that which is exposed by the Bible as wrong 'wrong'. It's an important skill which should be developed. Why? Because to be able to repent, we must know that there is something we need to change our mind about, something that is wrong. And believe it or not, it helps to be surrounded by people who are able to help us learn to discern right from wrong—not as the world defines it, but as God's Word reveals it.

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:25)

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:12-13)

Condemnation is condemning or declaring judgment upon someone to an unwanted consequence, like sentencing someone to jail or condemning someone to hell. We can sometimes condemn and shame people in how we look at them, speak to them, speak about them, reject them both passively or aggressively. Rejecting them passively is to sit apart from them, or perhaps not invite them to an event to which we have invited many people. It is to communicate shame and hopelessness. It is to isolate rather than to draw in.

Conviction is to share the truth of God in regards to the activity in question in order to help someone change their mind to agree with God rather than to agree with world. It's meant to draw someone in and bring restored relationship with the congregation as much as with God.

Galatians 6:1-2 tells us: Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Part of coming together in fellowship is helping each other to bear our burdens, in this case with the burden of sin. Oh my brothers and sisters, we are not meant to face sin alone. The mature and understanding believers are going to judge words and actions, not people. They will not condemn one another but will gently convict us about words and deeds that are sinful, that is to say 'missing the mark' and not living up to the Law of Liberty in Christ. The Law of Liberty we can explore more later, but it is referenced in James 1:25; 2:12.

When we come together we can lighten each other's burdens in order to gently restore each other. We will need boundaries in place to start so that we do not get tempted by the sin of another. After all, unless you are equipped to save a drowning man, they will pull you under with them. So, we should be mature and well-equipped to help restore someone caught in sin.



But, as the man who helped Jesus bear His cross on the way to Golgotha, we are meant to come together and help bear the crosses of learning to die to self-desires and self-fulfillment thus fulfilling Jesus' call, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:24-26)

Mary Heller is a Navy Veteran, wife of a retired US Navy Sailor, and a mother of four, the youngest two whom she continues to homeschool through their now-high school years. Mary has long been active in ministry and is past-president of the Ft. Meade, Maryland, Chapter of PWOC and has also served other capacities, most often Vice President of Spiritual Life. Her passion is studying and teaching God's word. Mary currently serves as Vice Chair of the CMF Board of Directors.



Many Americans today are very troubled about the circumstances they are facing now and in foreseeable future. The Christian knows intellectually that the answer is in Jesus Christ or God, but questions "What will that look like?" or "How do I know that He will see me through?"

When Jesus saved you, He also promised to always be with you, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20). This promise has not changed. It is as true as the day that said it.

JESUS IS YOUR HOPE

There are two kinds of hope. There is a hope that the future will turn out fine. One hopes that what they did or said was acceptable.

Biblical hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised; its strength in His faithfulness. "... God, desiring even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the fact that His purpose is unchangeable, confirmed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable" (Hebrews 6:17 – 19). "... And hope does not disappoint" (Romans 5:5).

JESUS IS YOUR REFUGE

Over the years people have sought ways to protect themselves from disaster. Bomb shelters were built in the 50s for protection from an atomic bomb attack. Other stocked up on freeze-dried food for when normal food supplies are unavailable.

Currently, the rich are establishing a safe haven to stash their wealth. Others are buying cyber money for when the US dollar is the devaluated.

There is a year or more wait to buy generators to power electricity for fear the electric power grids break down and no local electrical power is available. Solar power is only reliable as long as the batteries last and must be replaced.

All these attempts to find refuge in the list above, plus a myriad of others, provide extremely limited protection from

disaster. However, God himself is the better way of protection. The psalmist said, "The Lord helps them and rescues them; He rescues them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him" (Psalm 37:4). "How great is your goodness, which You have stored up for those fear You, which You have performed for those who take refuge in You, before the sons of mankind" (Psalms 31:19)!

Jesus is there for you! "He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you may take refuge; His faithfulness as a shield and wall" (Psalms 91:4).



JESUS IS YOUR PEACE

Jesus promises, "Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful" (John 14:27). This peace is available to all who belong to him by faith without exception.

Biblical peace is relational. It is not dependent upon good or evil circumstances. Biblical peace is dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His love, care and protection for His people.

Many capable Christians do not experience Jesus' peace since they depend upon themselves rather than depending upon Jesus to be the daily source of life and purpose. They want Jesus to help them accomplish their agendas: spiritual, personal and secular, rather than cooperate with him in His direction and purpose for their lives.

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Are You Interested in Becoming a Local Leader?

Christian Military Fellowship exists to help you fulfill your calling in Christ to share the hope that is in you with those with whom you interact as part of your daily life.

Briefly, CMF Local Leaders will start, and sustain a CMF fellowship made up of members of the military community in their area. While CMF is an "all ranks" ministry, our area of focus is on enlisted personnel. Local leaders institute and lead the military community in Bible study, prayer, and fellowship,

keeping in communication with participants. They should also seek to build relationships with the chaplains and the chaplain team.

Toward that end we encourage you to study and complete the CMF briefing material:

Orientation (Brief #1) that shares an overview of the CMF ministry.

Developing a Local Ministry (Brief #2) that shares the Biblical foundation

for and delineates the logical steps in beginning your local ministry.

Pray and Plan (Brief #3) that shares the most important activity of all! Asking Jesus what He would have you to do and then being obedient to follow His leading in your local ministry.

If you choose to begin this process, please reach out to us at: leader@cmfhq.org.

We're praying for you!

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The Pursuit of Happiness

The Pursuit of Jesus is the Pursuit of Happiness. Luke 4:18-19 (NASB) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Robert H. Stein provides in the New American Commentary that the word "gospel" is ... "basically a synonym for the 'good news of the kingdom of God.'" Isn't that wonderful? The kingdom of God is the happiness that everyone can pursue, from millennia past to here and now! In fact, in Luke 4:43 Jesus tells declares to His disciples that the bringing us into the kingdom of God was His purpose: "But He said to them, 'I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.'"

We are all endowed with the right to pursue this happiness because we all have the opportunity for Salvation. When Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah (Is 61:1-2) at the synagogue in Nazareth, He read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and to comfort all who mourn." Jesus then rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Read Isaiah 61:1-2. You will note that Jesus left something out when He read to those in the synagogue. Jesus left out the words "the day of vengeance of our God". Why did He do this? Because He was anointed to bring good news, to comfort, to free those held captive by sin. The purpose of the Messiah was not to bring vengeance, but to save those who are perishing by giving everlasting life to whosoever believes in Him. And with His coming, we have peace with God. Romans 5:1 "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us Rejoice in our God-Given Rights!

The Declaration of Independence is an amazing document, one that has been studied by nations and loved by Americans since it was written. Americans often quote it as they underscore the great rights enumerated within its volume, but the

truth is that there are not rights granted to us by our Declaration, and the document itself makes that clear. All men are endowed with rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, not because of the Declaration of Independence but because of God, who created the earth and everything in it. While we live in a great county, it is better said that we serve a great God. Let us praise Him for His goodness and the many gifts that He has bestowed upon us!

Author Unknown



Jesus is Your Hope, Refuge, and Peace Today

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The writer of Hebrews identifies one's preoccupation with themselves, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have" (Hebrews 13:5). However, if you entrust yourself to Jesus' control, "He himself has said, 'I will never desert you nor will I never abandon you'" (Hebrews 13:5).

As you entrust yourself to Jesus, you will always experience His peace. If you choose not to entrust yourself to Him you will experience all kinds of fears and anxieties.

Jesus comforts you with this promise, "These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The apostle Paul, who experience all kinds of adversities and conflicts concludes, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Jesus is your HOPE, REFUGE and PEACE today and forever!

Pastor Bob Bingham, who passed into glory earlier this year, was a long-time member of CMF and former member of the CMF Board of Directors. He was a missionary to the military for 17 years and pastored Rocky Mountain Evangelical Free Church for 25 years. Pastor Bob is greatly missed but we are blessed that his ministry and words still remain to encourage us.

CHRISTIAN MILITARY FELLOWSHIP

An Indigenous Ministry • Discipleship • Prayer • Community • Support

Encouraging Men and Women in the United States Armed Forces, and their families, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are pleased to announce that MinistryWatch has listed CMF as one of their "Shining Light" Ministries. To become a MinistryWatch "Shining Light," a ministry must have earned a 5-star rating on MinistryWatch's 5-star financial efficiency scale. Further, those ministries on this list have a Transparency Grade of "A." That's MinistryWatch's highest transparency grade. Out of 700 ministries, only 13 meet these strict criteria.

<https://ministrywatch.com/ministrywatches-annual-list-of-shining-light-ministries/>

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We are members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and Christian Service Charities in order to maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability.

