

“GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH!”

The passion for freedom and deep conviction of Patrick Henry is an admiral example for us today. I believe his message and actions are important to understand to shake this apathetic generation. Tyranny and wickedness is mounting to great heights again to thwart the feeble hearted. We need courage and faith as Ambassadors for Christ to resist and rise up against wickedness as voices for the Kingdom of God!

In March of 1775, attorney Patrick Henry rode into the small town of Culpepper, Virginia. As he rode into the town square, he was completely shocked by what he witnessed. There, in the middle of the square, was a man tied to a whipping post, his back laid bare, with bones exposed. He had been scourged mercilessly, with whips laced with metal. When they stopped beating him, Patrick Henry could plainly see the bones of his rib cage. He turned to ask someone in the crowd, “What has the man done to deserve such a beating as this?” The reply given him was that the man being scourged was a minister. He was one of twelve preachers, locked in jail, because they refused to take the king’s license to preach the gospel.

The governor was under orders from King George to compel all preachers to take the license. While being tried, without the benefit of a jury, the minister stated, **“I will never submit to taking your license. I am controlled by the Holy Spirit, and authorized by God Almighty, and will not allow you to control me by a license, no matter what you may do to me.”** Three days later, he was scourged to death, and such was the fate of the other ministers, as well. This was the incident that sparked Patrick Henry to write the famous words, which later became the rallying cry of the American Revolution,

“What is it that the gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to purchase at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”

THE WAR INEVITABLE SPEECH:

“No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as the abilities of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the house. But different men often see the same subject in different lights, and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I should speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the house is one of awful moment to this country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

*Mister President, it is natural for man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth - and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? **Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it...***

Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation - the last arguments to which kings resort...

Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, we may indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free - if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending - if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained - we must fight! - I repeat, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!...

Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means the God of Nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we are base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable - and let it come! I repeat, sir, let it come!...

Why stand we here idle? What is it the gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God - I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" (Patrick Henry, March, 1775)

I hope that the reading of this will give you the depth of meaning that liberty had to those who fought so valiantly for it to pass it on to us. **There are now, those among us who have the same unquenchable thirst for liberty and the dignity of a FREE people under Jesus Christ our Sovereign King. A people who are just as concerned of the usurpations of liberty as those who have gone before.**

"The strength and power of despotism consists wholly in the fear of resistance." (Thomas Paine)