

Pursuit of Happiness

Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

This is Perry Greene, your host for GodNAmerica. Today's devotional thought is "Pursuit of Happiness."

There is a right way and a wrong way to seek happiness. Rejoicing in the Lord is always the right way. Jesus outlines our pursuit of happiness in the section we call the "Beatitudes" in **Matthew 5**. Yet, the concept is all through the Bible. In fact, in the case of the Beatitudes, the word, "Blessed" means "happy."

I like Benjamin Franklin's concept of happiness and its pursuit:

"The U. S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself."

One of the things the Framers built into our Constitution is the biblical concept of private property. As God began giving His Torah to Israel at Sinai, He speaks of private property in the Ten Commandments. Notice, **Exodus 20:17** (ESV):

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Ultimately God owns everything. He does, however, allow us to be stewards of what is His in the form of what we call, "private property." There is something special about our delegated ownership of property that encourages us to have happiness we would not otherwise have.

Did you know that at one time in our history the Pilgrims tried Socialism? It failed, just like in all of the modern attempts at socialism! The Pilgrims set it up so that everyone was supposed to work. The produce would be placed in a community barn and then as you needed food, you simply went and took what you needed. How do the Communists say it, "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need"?

It sounds appealing, but it doesn't work. You can guess what happened with the Pilgrims. They had shirkers even among their godly group. Some pretend to be ill so that they didn't have to work. Yet, they wanted to eat and the workers resented working for the shirkers. Governor William Bradford said:

"Community of property was found to breed much confusion and discontent."

So, what was the solution? Private property and free enterprise! After all, the Bible says in **2 Thessalonians 3:10** (ESV):

"... If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

They divided the property into family plots and each worked their plot as they wanted. They could use their produce for food or for barter. As a result they went from near starvation to exporting corn.

Is it any wonder that people are streaming into the United States for freedom and property? Americans have had the chance to set their own destinies by applying themselves to God's principles of economics as well as politics.

It is important to know our history. It is important to see that Socialism in all of its forms does not work, especially for our happiness. Isn't it interesting that all of the people clamoring for socialism in America aren't going to Venezuela or Cuba, they are trying to change America. They think that in America we will

be an exception to the rule. I wonder how people would be if they did live in a Socialist country for a year or two to see what it is like. Would they still want Socialism with all of its shortages? Or, would they prefer free enterprise with unlimited possibilities? Which is biblical?

I'll close today with this quote I found on Facebook from a "**Horrible World History**" post.

"Studying history will sometimes disturb you.

Studying history will sometimes upset you.

Studying history will sometimes make you furious.

If studying history always makes you feel proud and happy, you probably aren't studying history."

Aren't you glad God works with us in our flaws to make us better? That's true as individuals. That's true as a nation. When we realize our accountability to God we want Him to make us better people and clean up our flaws. The Pilgrims made a course correction and left us a clear example to follow.

Until next time, Keep The Light Burning!