

Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness

Three Promises Only God Can Keep

Independence Day Weekend • July 5, 2026 • Happy 250th Birthday, America

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TODAY'S SCRIPTURE • ISAIAH 55:1–3 (NKJV)

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.”

KEY VERSE

“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?”

— Isaiah 55:2

THE BIG IDEA

You're not pursuing the wrong things—you're pursuing the right things in the wrong place.

The Fridge and the Famine

This week I caught myself standing in front of the open refrigerator for the third time in an hour. Same fridge. Same food. Nothing had changed since the last two times I looked. But I stood there with the cold air pouring out, waiting—like maybe this time the refrigerator had finally decided to show me some love.

Then it hit me right there in my kitchen: **this is our whole country.** Three hundred and thirty million people, standing in front of the open door of the American Dream, cold air pouring out, looking for something to satisfy that was never in there to begin with—and going back to look again. And again. And again. We've got more in the fridge than any nation in history. And we're starving.

For 250 years Americans have talked about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Founders believed those rights came from God. Modern culture still wants the rights—it just wants to fire the Author. But you cannot keep the gift while dismissing the Giver. Isaiah 55 is God's altar call to weary exiles who traded their covenant inheritance for the glitter of Babylon, only to find themselves starving in the middle of abundance. The prophet opens with a cry usually reserved for pronouncing judgment—yet

here it becomes an invitation to grace. To every thirsty soul, God says: stop spending your life on what is not bread. Come and be filled.

POINT ONE

America Protects Life. Jesus Gives Life.

This is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. — 1 John 5:11–12

When the Founders spoke of “life,” they meant every human life is a gift from God—not a gift from government. Government's job isn't to create life or decide whose life has value; its job is to protect the life the Creator has already given. Our most basic rights existed before any government, because they came from God.

But government can only guard the *breath* in your lungs—it cannot give you *the* Life your soul was made for. John reduces the whole question of eternity to a single word: not achievement, not attainment, but **possession**. “He who has the Son has life.” Eternal life is not a reward you earn but a Person you hold. And its opposite is stated with terrifying economy: the one who does not have the Son does not have life. No third category. No middle shelf. No partial credit.

Luther seized on that one word—*has*. You do not read “he who *works* has life,” or “he who has *done enough* has life,” but “he who has the Son.” It is received by the empty hand of faith. God is Life itself, and He freely offers eternal life to all who will simply take hold of His Son.

TAKEAWAY *America can keep you breathing. Only Jesus can make you alive.*

The Three Promises, Continued

POINT TWO

America Defends Liberty. Only Jesus Sets Captives Free.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. — Isaiah 61:1

For the Founders, liberty was never “you do you.” It was freedom under moral restraint—freedom from unjust coercion so a person could practice virtue and fulfill their duties to God, family, and neighbor. They spoke of *ordered liberty*, drawing a sharp line between liberty and license, convinced that a people without moral self-control would lose their republic.

But there is a freedom deeper than any nation can defend. The word for “liberty” in Isaiah 61 is a rare, weighty term whose home is the law of the Year of Jubilee—the once-in-fifty-years trumpet blast when every debt was cancelled, every slave walked free, and every family came home to its inheritance. So when the Anointed One says He came to “proclaim liberty to the captives,” He is announcing Himself as the living, permanent Jubilee. The trumpet is no longer blown from a priest's lips—it is incarnate.

That is covenant liberty: not the liberty of autonomy that says “leave me alone,” but the liberty of restoration that says “come home.” America can strike the chains off your wrists. Only Jesus reaches down into the heart and changes what you love—setting free the very will that once loved its chains.

TAKEAWAY *America can take off your chains. Only Jesus can change your wants.*

POINT THREE

America Promises the Pursuit. Jesus Gives the Fulfillment.

Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. — Isaiah 55:2

Notice what the Declaration actually promises: not happiness, but the *pursuit* of it. Even the brilliant men of the eighteenth century could only guarantee the chase, not the catch. And in their day, “happiness” meant a life of well-being and moral excellence, not a fleeting mood; “pursuit” meant living a way of life that produced lasting character, purpose, and human flourishing.

But somewhere along the way we swapped the flourishing for the feeling. We turned the pursuit into an industry, and we are the most documented and least content people who have ever lived—spending real silver on counterfeit bread. Isaiah names the tragedy of every generation: full stomachs, full schedules, full bank accounts, and empty hearts. The answer isn't to strive harder—“incline your ear, hear, and your soul shall live.” Life is not found by chasing; it is received by coming.

And then Isaiah unveils the astonishing promise: “the sure mercies of David”—the everlasting covenant once reserved for a king, now offered freely to everyone who thirsts. Paul tells us in Acts 13:34 these mercies are guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The banquet is free because Another paid the price, and the empty tomb is Heaven's receipt that the debt has been fully satisfied.

TAKEAWAY *America promised you the chase. Heaven is offering you the catch.*

THE HEART OF IT ALL

Three promises. Life—but you may only be breathing. Liberty—but you may still be in Egypt. Happiness—but you may still be chasing the car. Every one of them was made on parchment by men who are dust now. But there was another document, written not in ink but in blood—and it didn't merely declare your rights, it purchased your life.

The chase is over. The catch is here. And His name is Jesus.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Father, I confess I have stood at the open door of a hundred empty things, waiting for them to love me back. I have spent my silver on what is not bread and my years on what does not satisfy. Today I stop chasing and I come. Thank You that the life I could never manufacture is a gift held out in Your Son. Thank You that the freedom I could never win was purchased at a cross and proven at an empty tomb. Give me the Son, and with Him give me life, liberty, and a joy the world can neither grant nor take away. I incline my ear. I come to You. Let my soul live. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflect & Respond

This week's step: Name one “fridge” in your life—something you keep returning to for a satisfaction it can't give—and each morning bring that hunger to God and receive from Him instead of chasing it.

1. Where have I been “standing at the open fridge”—going back again and again to something that keeps leaving me empty?
2. Am I merely *breathing*, or am I truly *alive* in Christ? Do I **have** the Son?
3. Where have I confused freedom *from* restraint with the deeper freedom of belonging to God? What do I actually *want*—and what needs to change?
4. In what ways have I been chasing the *feeling* of happiness instead of receiving the *fullness* Christ freely offers—and what would it look like to simply *come* to the One who satisfies?

Notes & Journaling

Use the space below to record what God is saying to you this week.