

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

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"THEY DIDN'T GET TO EXPERIENCE IT"

In my many years of Bible study, I have run across some very touching Passages.

One of them is found in the Book of Hebrews, Chapter 11 in what we know as "God's Honor Roll" or "God's Heroes of Faith".

Verse after verse lists these men and women who ranked high in that listing.

Noah, Abraham, Moses and on-and-on it goes, listing their accomplishments in the Old Testament Works of God.

Then, the Passage closes with a somewhat sad - well, really sad - statement:

"They had trials of cruel mocking and scourging, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, sawed in two, tempted, killed by the sword . . . destitute, afflicted, tormented . . . And these all, after receiving a good report (of a job well done), did not get to experience what The Lord had promised (Heb 11:36-39).

Think of that! They laid the groundwork for a great work; but did not get to see their plans happen; did not get to experience that for which they laid the foundation!

In studying historical documents in preparation for this Sunday's Independence Day Sermon; I had a tremendous thought along those same ideas.

If you remember your Third Grade (in my case) History, you will recall those extremely brave members of the Continental Congress that met in the early 1700's to finally arrive at their goal to declare our Independence from England.

They met and met and talked and talked and agreed and disagreed (Congress hasn't changed much, has it) and made motions and seconded motions, and voted stuff up and down; but they had a very important target at which they were shooting at the end of the day - telling George III where to get off the train or bus (or schooner or ox cart in that day).

Congress voted to declare their (our) independence and, since 24/7 news had not been invented yet, the word was slow getting out to the eagerly awaiting nation.

So, the Congress asked five men to write out an early form of a "news release" to explain what was going on; and you know that document as our "Declaration of Independence".

"So far, so good"; as they say.

But, sadly; just as in Hebrews 11; most of these signers of the Declaration were severely punished by George's red-clad military.

How severely were they "punished"?

So much, they never got to experience the free nation they had voted to fight for! Most of them didn't live through it; and those that did were impoverished beyond measure.

You know, the only "freedom" that is truly "free" is that "freedom" that we can experience when we receive Jesus The Christ as our personal Savior - and even then, it is not truly free! Oh, our part is; but it cost God His Son to bring it; and God's Son His Life to pay for it!

Dear God, thank you for past blessings; please bless our nation - again!

Tom Mooty has served Newport's West End Baptist Church as its Supply Pastor, Interim Pastor, Guest Pastor, Pastor, Senior Pastor, and very, very, very Senior Pastor for a total of thirty three cumulative years; and writes this column for The Newport Plain Talk's Wednesday and Weekend Editions. Please let the "Plain Talk" know your comments concerning this column.