**Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation**

Today is Independence Day, July 4th – 245 years ago we declared our independence from British rule. Our nation has strong Christian roots. Even as early 1662, settlers were being persecuted for belief in Jesus by King Charles II. Christian’s were hunted down and imprisoned. Around 1773, Jesus was seen as such a threat to British rule that one of the King’s appointed governors wrote to the Board of Trade in England saying: "If you ask an American, who is his master? He will tell you he has none, nor any governor but Jesus Christ.” There are still Americans today who will answer this same way to those who would be lord over us.

Our Independence rests in our dependence on Jesus Christ. Our true freedom - the freedom from the fear of death, the freedom to know we have a permanent address in heaven, the freedom to know our eternal destination – all rests in One Hope, One Death, One Resurrection, One Name… Jesus. We can have no true independence unless we have full dependence on Jesus Christ.

Our scripture starts this morning *And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain,* Christ is worthy – He is deserving to take the scroll and open the seven seals. True independence has started as Jesus opens the seals and the evil of this world is addressed once and for all. Christ fulfills the promise made in Genesis 3:15 – Christ will overcome Satan – the Seed of the woman Mary will overwhelm the evil. There is freedom and true independence in Christ our Lord.

Did you know that anti-venom for rattlesnakes is made from the blood of sheep? It seems that, when a lamb is injected with venom, the blood produces anti-venom. When bitten, the lamb may swell up, be in terrible pain, so much so that, at times, the shepherd believes it will die, but all the while, the blood of the lamb is producing anti-venom. The venom that will almost surely kill a man can be counteracted by the anti-venom made from the blood of a lamb… but the man, the woman must choose to receive the antidote – we don’t have that natural capacity - made from the blood of the lamb.

Christ’s blood, the blood of the perfect Lamb of God, protects us, delivers us from the bite of the serpent, but we must choose to receive the blood of the Lamb… believing that He alone can save us. When we don’t believe we won’t receive. *And have redeemed us to God by Your blood.* Your blood Oh God has redeemed us! Your blood purchased us in the open marketplace – we were out in the open, unprotected from this world and You made us Your own. We are born bitten by sin and sin robs us of our peace, causing us to writhe in pain, but through the antidote of Your blood, we are saved and You set us in an open place – You are our shepherd, we shall not want – we may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, but we will fear no evil. Why? Because we have the blood of the Risen Christ protecting us and we will one day dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

But who has access to this wonderful, life-saving blood, the antivenom for sin, the very antidote of death? Everyone – Christ purchases and redeems, not based on the color of the skin, or the affiliation to a nation, but *Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.* Salvation has nothing to do with family and location and everything to do with Mercy and Grace. We don’t have the anti-venom. We must receive it from Him. Tribe should be understood here to mean those inside Israel – the Jews - and nation should be understood as everyone else – the Gentiles. It doesn’t say everyone will be saved, but that Out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, people are redeemed – redeemed through the belief in Jesus – redeemed by our Faith in the blood of the Lamb. Those that refuse to believe… will not receive… why? Because they refused to believe and, if you do not believe, you are not redeemed. God gives us that choice.

Our true independence comes only through dependence on Jesus for His saving Grace and atoning Blood. On this 4th of July, are you saved by the blood that Jesus offers? Do you have the anti-venom to this world coursing through your soul? If not, make today your true Independence Day – the day you became immune to spiritual death because of an antidote made from the Blood of a Lamb named Jesus.