



Happy Juneteenth! Whether this is a familiar holiday met with anticipation and fond memories or a brand new experience for you, we are all invited to celebrate as a community today. Wherever we fall along that spectrum, it is essential to note that this holiday is rooted in an ideal that is foundational to this country and intrinsic to the Bible, and that is the promise of freedom.

Throughout the entirety of the scriptures, we see the theme of God's freedom. In his inaugural sermon, Jesus states, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." (Luke 4:18). As a community of believers, we are called to the high standard of living out these ideals in our daily lives as we strive to follow the example set by Christ and rejoice in our freedom that was won through the ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

Today we celebrate the pivotal moment in American history when, on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas, the last of those enslaved in the US learned that the Civil War had ended and slavery had been abolished—more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued. And while today is a day of celebration of the progress we have made, it is also a day set aside for authentic reflection of where we have yet to go. In the wake of the killings of Breonna Taylor,

Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks, we are reminded just how far we as a nation must continue to strive to realize this promise of freedom. Therefore, I implore everyone in our community to celebrate the promise of freedom on this day, but to do so in an earnest state of reflection of how we are living out the values of Christ, loving our neighbors, and making their struggles our struggles.

Warm Regards,

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