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“I hate it,” said Abraham Lincoln, “because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world – enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites – causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty – criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest.”

In other words, documents, like the Declaration of Independence, are meaningless sheets of paper unless their guiding principles live in the hearts of “We the People.” That’s because God-given liberty exacts an inconvenient and heavy price from those who would be free: a healthy respect for the freedom of others. “As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master,” said Lincoln, “This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.”

Monday, the United State Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments in Case #11398, *Department of Health and Human Services vs. Florida* ... the case to decide the constitutionality of ObamaCare.

The first question before the court was whether the penalty levied against any citizen who refuses to pay the premium of the individual mandate is a tax. If so, the Anti-Injunction Act of 1867 would deny all court’s jurisdiction to hear an ObamaCare case until the first American was fined for non-payment (sometime in 2015). In a bizzaro moment, Chief Justice Samuel Alito observed to the lawyer representing the government, “Today you are arguing that the penalty is not a tax ... tomorrow you will be back and arguing that the penalty is a tax.”

The Progressive left speaks out of both sides of its mouth because the only principle at stake, as Lincoln noted, is self-interest – which, in the case of bipartisan Washington is unrestrained power.

In a 2009 interview with ABC’s George Stephanopoulos, President Obama insisted the penalty was not a tax. “No – no!” said the president, “That’s not true, George. For us to say that you’ve got to take responsibility to get health insurance is absolutely not a tax increase. What it’s saying is that we’re not going to have other people carrying your burdens for you.”

The welfare state, Obama admitted, is designed to enslave. It’s what “responsible” government does.

The ultimate winner of the ObamaCare argument will help the high court decide if Congress has the power to force so-called free Americans to labor against their will in the cotton fields of government-run health care. President Obama, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid and Blue-State Republicans like former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney precipitated this constitutional crisis by advancing their self-interest (getting elected) while appealing to the corrupt and misguided self-interest of voters – wanting “free” entitlement programs at the expense (both in cash and freedom) of their fellow citizens.

With the nation politically divided between free and slave (those who want the freedom that comes with small government and those that seek unattainable security and government license to plunder their neighbor’s goods), it falls to the Supreme Court to decide the issue. That means the question of America’s freedom rests not with 350 million Americans jealous of their liberties. Instead, it hangs by the thinnest thread of the high court’s five-four conservative majority.

How did a free people ever allow it to come to this? And more importantly, does such a debauched nation deserve freedom when it is engaged in “open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty”?

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