

# Memorial Day 2023 – The Liberty They Died For

Each year we take a Sunday to reflect on the fact that freedom is not free. It is not inappropriate to celebrate with barbecues and trips to the country because those who fought for freedom did not do so so we could be under lockdown. They did it so we can be free from fear to be able to live and celebrate life. First, though, we need to contemplate the cost of freedom so that we might truly appreciate the value of the liberty that we enjoy.

## 1. Their sacrifice -

Some of those who have been laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery and all around the world might have lingered for days before succumbing to their wounds, but I suspect that most had bare seconds if at all to contemplate the significance of their sacrifice. Perhaps they could not have had a totally realistic understanding when they went off to war what that moment was going to be like. *They* might not have had enough time to contemplate their sacrifice...but we *do*. I would like to encourage you to read the entire article *Sacred Duty: A Soldier's Tour at Arlington National Cemetery* by Sen. Tom Cotton. The whole piece is fascinating, but I will excerpt only the ending:

No one summed up better what The Old Guard of Arlington means for our nation than Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey. He shared a story with me about taking a foreign military leader through Arlington to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Sergeant Major Dailey said, "I was explaining what The Old Guard does and he was looking out the window at all those headstones. After a long pause, still looking

at the headstones, he said, 'Now I know why your soldiers fight so hard. You take better care of your dead than we do our living.' "

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[imprimis.hillsdale.edu/sacred-duty-soldiers-tour-arlington-national-cemetery/](http://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/sacred-duty-soldiers-tour-arlington-national-cemetery/)

## 2. The liberty they died for -

Those who died for our liberty provided the opportunity for us to have the ultimate liberty in Christ.

You might have heard it said that we are not free to do what we want but to do what we ought to do. The idea is not that we are free from the threat of the judgment of Hell so that we can freely sin. Yes, we are free of the threat of the judgment of Hell but the reason *why* we are free of the judgment of Hell is the reason we will not feel free to sin. We are free of the threat of Hell because we are free from the power of temptation *to* sin.

Gal 5:13-18 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

We are freed from the power of temptation as we walk in the Spirit.

Rom 6:5-11 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:

6Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

### 3. Living in liberty -

Paul has spoken of that liberty, but not to be used as license to carry out the lusts of the flesh and for self. We are free to use our liberty for God's glory, not our own interests. Our liberty is greatly magnified when we realize that countless men have given their lives so we can exercise *godly* liberty. Those men were able to give their lives because they grew up in a nation that had a Christian spirit of self sacrifice.

The key, then, to the liberty we live in is to not seek to serve self.

1Cor 13:1-8 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Rom 12:16-21 *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing

thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Jas 1:23-25 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

We cannot lightly take our liberty in the home of the free and the brave. There are those who reject all government intervention. That is not the kind of liberty that we celebrate. Government exists for those who do not live in the liberty of Christ to serve each other in love.

Rom 13:1-5 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

We are not free to rebel against the state to serve self, but free from the power of sin to act as ambassadors for Christ. We represent a gracious and merciful God and Savior.

Eph 2:1-5 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Ps 103:8-10 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

10He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Jas 3:13-18 Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

In God's grace, He gives you something that you don't deserve: salvation. In His mercy, He does not give you what you *do* deserve: judgment. Forgiveness is a *gift*, not a *reward*. You can't ever *deserve* forgiveness. We *give* when we forgive. We give mercy and grace.

Matt 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We are a community that is called upon to live *within* the grace and mercy of God. It is only when someone does not live within that grace that government becomes necessary. Those who live outside of the grace and mercy of God will live under the judgment of God through the role of government.

Even though we seek to affirm a culture where all are free to present their views, the world is generally not willing to let that be. There will always be those who will go to great length to force, coerce, and ultimately enslave men to a government approved way of life. The irony is that the hostile world says that they crush opposition in order to liberate society of those who live in true freedom.

The world might think standards of holiness are too restrictive, but then will force *its* morality instead. As long as there are sinners who work their way into power to crush true freedom we will have Memorial Days for those who protect us. We must let those we memorialize be a sobering inspiration of the high cost they have paid so that we can exercise our freedom in Christ. If we don't exercise that freedom to bring people to God, they will have died in vain. Are you living responsibly serving God?

1. Their sacrifice -
2. The liberty they died for - Gal 5:13-18, Rom 6:5-11, Rom 6:18
3. Living in liberty - 1Cor 13:1-8, Rom 12:16-21, Jas 1:23-25, Rom 13:1-5, Eph 2:1-5, Ps 103:8-10, Jas 3:13-18, Matt 6:14-15