

Memorial Day - The Uniformed Services

As we take time to remember our military who have fallen in the defense of freedom this weekend, we take special note that freedom is not free. From time to time, freedom is put to the ultimate test but that should only remind us that there is a daily cost to freedom. That cost to us is that we must exercise that freedom by fulfilling our daily responsibility of maintaining our consciousness of the attitudes and efforts that thwart our freedom. Although freedom is known throughout the world to various degrees, there is no country where that freedom is more firmly established in the bedrock foundation of that country than the United States of America. Part of the cost of defending that freedom is education. I am not referring to the practice of taking out astronomical student loans in the hope of bettering one's career and comfort. I am talking about knowing about the principles upon which this country was founded. You might not be totally aware of it, but just by exercising our individual fear, respect, and responsibility before God each week we are living out a vital part of keeping our freedom secure. This is a subject that is so dear to my heart that I am happy to take time to talk about if anyone would like to know more. Now, today, we remind ourselves of the great price that has been paid by those who have fallen to preserve our freedom.

1. The bond of brothers -

The Bible is not just a book of theology; It is a Book that speaks of God's precious interaction with mankind.

Ps 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

For all that this world has thrown at the saints of God, some of those saints got to have the greatest earthly reward possible – a mention in the eternal Word of God. There are some wonderful

memorials recorded in the Scriptures. The memorial that I would like us to take note of today is Jonathan, the son of King Saul, and David's dearest friend on earth. What an unlikely pair he and David made! Saul had turned so bitterly against David and hounded him throughout his reign. Jonathan would have been next in line to be king and could have been jealous of David, but he was not. The Scriptures indicate that he was not only very conscious of this, but that it had no effect on his preference for David. There was none closer to David than Jonathan. Their military relationship is seen in David's eulogy of Jonathan.

2Sam 1:17-27 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.)

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had not been* anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon

your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

It is evident that what they had was beyond a military relationship. David and Jonathan had a bond of brotherhood between them. It is that same relationship that enabled those we remember today to fight to maintain our freedom. There is something special about the bond of those who have served in the military. The spirit that strengthened them had deeper roots than the cause for which they fight. It is rooted in a sense of selflessness that enables them to bond beyond themselves to that cause. I would like to focus on how that sense of selflessness is especially made manifest by the uniform that our heroes have chosen to wear.

2. The significance of the uniform -

I have often worn polo shirts during the week. If it is in the winter, I might or might not wear a coat...often not. Because of that, when I am in a store I will, from time to time, have someone think that I am an employee and ask for help. Of course, I am going to help, but I realize that I am sort of obligated because it *looks* like I am wearing a store uniform. The uniform communicates that I am there, not for myself, but for others.

The wearing of the uniform is something sacred. By its very nature it is sacred. It sets you apart. This is true no matter what kind of uniform it is, not just a military uniform. It says that you do not belong to yourself. You have chosen to live to serve others while you wear that uniform. It speaks of the willingness to sacrifice self.

2Cor 1:8-9 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

When men put on the military uniform, they are relinquishing their personal rights, in general. It is like they are writing a blank check knowing that on the *amount* line their government might fill in the words *your life*. The uniform declares that they are not their own, but that they are under command. You give up your individuality. No one is allowed to *accessorize* and *glam up* his uniform with his own personal touches and style. You are no longer an individual but part of a unit.

Wearing a military uniform takes on extra significance because it means that you are subjecting yourself to a high possibility of death. Have you ever wondered how so many could storm the beaches of Normandy or fight for a barren volcanic island in the Pacific? It is because when they joined they knew they had the sentence of death in themselves. They were committed from the beginning. No one should go into the military for mere career advancement. You have to be ready to die.

3. We have put on Christ -

We as, Christians, also wear a uniform.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Isa 61:10-11 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as

a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.
11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

This is what is so despicable as we examine modern common church practice. The whole effort to be "normal" is to be anti-Sacred. And yet, modern preachers who try to look so nonchalantly casual, contradict their knowledge of the sacred. They attempt to be common, not sacred. To be sure, they actually *have* donned a uniform in their very effort to look like they are not tied to tradition. They have created their *own* tradition. It reminds me of what was so repulsive of the 60s where all the young rebelled against tradition. In an effort to be unique and not the same as their parents, they *all dressed the same way!* Now, the casual preacher style is "in." The problem now is that the uniform they wear identifies them with rebellion and wanting to fit in with the world. Preachers do not wear a priestly uniform because there is no office of a priest in the New Testament church. But neither should we choose the uniform of the worldly-minded. People are adopting the sloppy mentality of the leaders while we should reflect holiness of Christ. Our greater uniform is Jesus Christ, Himself. Just as the military must not defile the uniformed services, we must not defile the uniform we wear, Jesus Christ.

Rom 6:3-6 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted

together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:

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

Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Eph 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

What is absolutely amazing is that it is Christ Who is fighting our battles. We will be clothed in white linen in the Revelation, but notice that when we come back with the Lord, there will be no stains of battle on those robes. Jesus Christ will do all fighting as He destroys those who oppose Him as He is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.

Rev 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness **he doth judge and make war.**

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And **he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.**

14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

4. Remembering those who have given their lives -

As we remember those who have

gone before us on this Memorial Day weekend, let us honor their sacrifice by exercising the freedom of religion that they fought to preserve. It will only be by the exercise of that freedom that we can put off the war and destruction that Satan is demonically happy to use to rob mankind of the opportunity to have an eternal relationship with God.

Heb 12:1-4 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

²Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

⁴Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Every weekend we honor and worship the One Who made the ultimate sacrifice for us to be in a better country. We can enjoy freedom from the bondage of sin because Christ was willing to make that sacrifice. We must never forget the blood He shed to provide us a home in heaven. Our Lord conquered death by rising victoriously from the grave. He lives to continually make intercession for us, praise God! (Heb. 7:25)

Zech 13:6 And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

2Cor 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Jesus is the ultimate Warrior, conquering Prince of Peace, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Without Him, there would be no physical freedom or spiritual deliverance! All glory and honor belong to Him forever and forever!

1John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

A high price was paid by those who fought for our freedom so you could be free to receive Christ for your salvation. It would be a tragic shame if after all they have suffered, you snubbed Jesus and chose to fade from this earth and go on to eternal Hell. A high price was paid so that those who are saved could live a life of service and be part of the host of heaven.

Are you a soldier of Christ who has been inducted into service through baptism? Are you putting on the whole armor of God? Have you entered the field of battle, snatching souls out of the enemy's hands? When Christ returns, will He find you at your post? When you hear reveille each day, is your response, "Here am I, send me"? Are you engaged in the training to make you ready for the battle? What is your decision?

1. The bond of brothers - Ps 116:15, 2Sam 1:17-27
2. The significance of the uniform - 2Cor 1:8-9
3. We have put on Christ - Gal 3:27, Isa 61:10-11, Rom 6:3-6, Rom 13:14, Eph 4:22-24, Eph 6:10-18, Rev 19:11-16
4. Remembering those who have given their lives - Heb 12:1-4, Zech 13:6, John 15:13, 2Cor 5:15, 1John 3:16