

Memorial Day 2009

The Virtue of Sacrifice

May 23-24, 2009

- Sermon's theme = Memorial Day is a reminder of the virtue of sacrifice for others.

Introduction

- Civil War – April 9, 1865 = 620,000
- World War I – June 28, 1919 = 116,708
- World War II – September 2, 1945 = 416,800
- Korea – July 27 1953* = 36,516
- Vietnam – April 30, 1975 = 58,159
- Gulf War I – February 28, 1991 = 182
- Gulf War II – Present = 4,298

Memorial Day

- **The Virtue of Sacrifice – John 15:13**
 - John 15:13
 - 13 *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*
 - John 15:13 (Message)
 - 13 *This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends.*
 - ✓ “Greater” = comparative
 - ✓ “lay down” = More than the offer, this is the actual action
 - We recognize all Veterans on Veterans day – they all have offered their lives in service
 - We recognize on Memorial Day those limited few members of the military who not only offered but who actually gave their lives
- There is no greater love (sacrifice) – if there was, then Christ would have demonstrated His love in that way

- There is no greater love (sacrifice) – if there was, then Christ’s love would be less than complete
- Sacrifice of oneself for others is one of the greatest virtues as demonstrated in the life of Christ

- **The Honoring of Sacrifice – 2 Samuel 1**

- 2 Samuel 1:1-10
- 2 Samuel 1:11-12a
 - 11 *Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them.*
 - 12 *They mourned and wept...*
- Honor through mourning (11-12a)
 - ✓ “*tore them*” = Meant to show the grief (tearing) of the heart; absence of personal vanity
 - ✓ Old Testament = Genesis 37:29, 34 (Story of Joseph – Reuben, Jacob); Job 1:20
 - ✓ New Testament = Acts 14:14 (Barnabas and Saul in Lystra)
 - ✓ “*mourned*” = Wail, lament
 - ✓ “*wept*” = Cry, shed tears
 - ✓ Jeremiah 9:1, “*Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.*”
 - Tears are, usually, an indication of the depth of love – we rarely cry for what barely touches us
 - The character of Memorial Day is very different than Independence Day – the latter is honor through celebration but the former is honor through mourning
 - This Memorial Day, honor those who have given their lives in sacrifice for you and your freedom by mourning for them
- 2 Samuel 1:12
 - 12 *...and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.*
- Honor through dedication (12b)
 - ✓ “*fasted*” = to go without food as a sign of great sorrow

- ✓ Cp. 1 Samuel 31:13; Matthew 9:14-15 (Jesus' disciples)
- ✓ Fasting is a dedication or consecration – I will dedicate this time to something other than eating
- ✓ Fasting is a change in the natural or normal order because there has been a change (or there is a desired change) in the natural or normal order of things
- Memorials are the setting aside of space with the desire that others will set aside time to honor those who have sacrificed for them
- Memorial Day was intended to be, and should be, a time of dedication or consecration or setting aside to show honor to those who have made a sacrifice for others
- For a believer, the same is true of Sunday (the Lord's day, resurrection day) in light of the sacrifice of Christ for us
- 2 Samuel 1:17-27
- 2 Samuel 1:17
 - 17 *David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan,*
- Honor through praise and appreciation (17-27)
- 2 Samuel 1:19, 23
 - 19 *Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!*
 - 23 *Saul and Jonathan-- in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.*
- ✓ It is fitting to praise those who have given their lives in sacrifice for others
- ✓ Sometimes it is difficult to speak of them because of the pain of grief but praise brings the celebration of life into the “courts” of death
- 2 Samuel 1:24
 - 24 *O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.*
- ✓ It is fitting to express appreciation for what others have meant to our lives – directly or indirectly
- Memorial Day is the opportunity for us to praise and express our appreciation for those who have blessed us – even those we may not have known
- **The Response to Sacrifice – 2 Samuel 23:14-17**

- 2 Samuel 23:14-17
 - 14 *At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem.*
 - 15 *David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!"*
 - 16 *So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD.*
 - 17 *"Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.*
 - ✓ This story confused me as a kid – wouldn't it be greater honor to drink the water?
 - ✓ David knew, and was teaching us an important principle – some sacrifice is too important to be treated as common or to offer less than our best honor
 - Memorial Day is not about a 3-day weekend or a family picnic or mattress sales – it's too important for all of those things
 - Men and women died that we could enjoy those things in freedom but Memorial Day is the time to honor their sacrifice not to enjoy the freedom
- **Sacrifice is...**
 - ✓ ...a virtue to be adopted by Jesus' disciples
 - ✓ ...worthy of honor – through mourning, dedication, praise and appreciation

Response

- **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we appreciate and adopt the virtue of sacrifice for others**
 - ✓ Observers = Accept Jesus' sacrifice for you
 - ✓ Disciples = Adopt the virtue of sacrifice for others and show appreciation for those who have sacrificed for others
 - ✓ All = Flag to wreath to honor a loved one who gave their lives in service to our country