Let Us Always Remember
(A Memorial Day Message)

Psalm 143:5

Please turn with me in your BIBLES to PSALM 143:5.

“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all Your works and consider what Your hands have done.”

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

For most people, MEMORIAL DAY means “a day off from work…… a long three-day weekend……”the unofficial start of summer”……… the running of the Indianapolis 500…….a cookout……or day on the beach.

But for families who have lost a loved one in war, Memorial Day means much, much more.

We tend to be a very “forgetful” people. The fact that the Word of God places so much emphasis on “remembering” is a testimony to just how forgetful we are.

*GOD placed the RAINBOW in the sky after the flood so we would always remember His promise never to destroy the earth by flood again. (Genesis 9:15)

*GOD gave the Jewish people the annual PASSOVER FEAST so they would always remember how He delivered them from bondage in Egypt and spared their lives on the night He sent death upon the firstborn of the Egyptians. (Deuteronomy 16:1-8)
*In Joshua chapter 4, when God stopped the flow of the Jordan River so the Israelites could cross over on dry ground into the Promised Land. God instructed Joshua to have one representative from each of the twelve tribes to pick up a stone from the middle of the river bed. And once they were safely on the other side of the river, Joshua took those twelve stones and built a Memorial so future generations would remember the miracle God performed there. (Joshua 4:1-9)

* And remember the Ark of The Covenant in the Old Testament. God instructed Moses to place three items inside the Ark of the Covenant as Memorials of Remembrance. (Hebrews 9:4)

  - THE MANNA was a reminder of God’s PROVISIONS in the WILDERNESS.
  - THE STONE TABLETS or “The Ten Commandments” were a reminder of GOD’S PRECEPTS.
  - And AARON’S ROD was a reminder of God’s PRIESTHOOD.

All three of these items pointed ultimately to Jesus Christ.

*And of course in the NEW TESTAMENT, the Memorial that is especially meaningful to us is THE LORD’S SUPPER.

LUKE 22:19,20 says, And He took BREAD, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “THIS IS MY BODY GIVEN FOR YOU; DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

THE RAINBOW……THE PASSOVER FEAST…….THE TWELVE STONES…….THE ARK OF THE COVENANT…..THE LORD’S SUPPER……..ALL OF THESE ARE “MEMORIALS”.....”REMINDEERS TO REMEMBER!”

On this Memorial Day Weekend, I would like to challenge all of us to remember three things:

First of all............
I. Let Us Remember THE SOLDIERS Who Died For Our Freedom

ILLUSTRATION: In April of 1863, in COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI, after decorating the graves of her two sons who died fighting for their beloved SOUTHLAND, an elderly woman walked to two mounds of dirt at the corner of the CEMETERY to place MEMORIAL FLOWERS there also.

A friend standing nearby shouted, “What are you doing? Those are the graves of TWO UNION SOLDIERS.” Softly, the compassionate mother said, “I know.” “I also know that somewhere in the NORTH, a mother or young wife mourns for them as we do for ours.”

1. It breaks my heart and stirs my anger when I hear Americans bashing America. It’s like a slap in the face of every man and woman who ever served in our Armed Forces, and especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

2. My grandpa, Mack Braziel fought in World War I. My uncle, Jim Braziel fought in World War II. My cousin, Gary “Butch” Hodge, fought in the Viet Nam War. And I am grateful to God they all came home safely from war. I will always be proud of their service to our country.

ILLUSTRATION

But from time to time I remember one who wasn’t so fortunate. His name was DENNIS HEFFNER.....PRIVATE FIRST CLASS, DENNIS HEFFNER. “Denny” as we called him was from my home Church in Indiana. He arrived in VIET NAM on July 30, 1968. He died just eighteen days later on August 16th. Denny was only 18 years old.... EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD! He had just graduated from High School a little over three months earlier.

I will never forget the feeling of running my fingers over his name on the Viet Nam Memorial Wall. Denny Heffner died so I could live a free man.

Today, I remember the sacrifice of Denny Heffner. Whose sacrifice do you remember? Perhaps a High School classmate.....a friend......a relative?

4. Today let us remember that IT IS THE SOLDIER, not the
THEOLOGIAN who has secured our FREEDOM OF RELIGION. IT IS THE SOLDIER, not the reporter, who has secured our FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. IT IS THE SOLDIER, not the PROTESTOR, who has secured our FREEDOM TO DEMONSTRATE. IT IS THE SOLDIER, not THE JUDGE OR LAWYER, who has secured our RIGHT TO A TRIAL BY A JURY OF OUR PEERS. IT IS THE SOLDIER, whose flag -draped casket, who secured the freedom of those who wish to burn the flag.

5. Let us remember those 25,324 who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

Let us remember those 498,332 who gave their lives in the CIVIL WAR.

Let us remember those 116,710 brave men and women who died in WORLD WAR I and the 407,316 who lost their lives in WORLD WAR II.

Let us remember those 54,546 who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the KOREAN WAR and the 58,098 who lost their lives in VIET NAM.

Let us remember those 293 who died in the FIRST GULF WAR. And the nearly 4,500 who lost their lives in the WAR IN IRAQ and the 1,586 who have died thus far in THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

Every time you HEAR A BUGLER PLAYING TAPS.
Every time you SEE A FLAG DRAPED CASKET.
Every time you READ THE OBITUARY OF MILITARY VETERAN.
Every time you SEE A MAN OR WOMAN IN A MILITARY UNIFORM.
Every time you HEAR A FIGHTER JET OR MILITARY HELICOPTER FLY OVER.
Every time you SEE AN AMERICAN FLAG BLOWING IN THE WIND. AND HEAR THE SINGING OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM.

REMEMBER.......REMEMBER!

II. Let Us Remember THE SAINTS Who Died For Their Faith
1. In today’s Church of ease and comfort, padded pews and air-conditioned Church buildings, and state-of-the-art audio and video equipment, we seldom, if ever think of those who were willing to pay the ultimate price to advance the cause of Jesus Christ.

2. Today, let us remember the FAITH of Stephen, the very first Christian martyr, who prayed that God would forgive those who stoned him to death.

Today, let us remember the FAITH of the apostle Paul and the apostle James, who were both beheaded for preaching the gospel.

Today, let us remember the FAITH of the apostle Peter and the apostle Philip, who were both crucified for their faith.

Today, let us remember the FAITH of the apostle Thomas who was speared to death in India.

Today, let us remember the FAITH of Luke, John Mark, Timothy, Barnabas and Simon, who all died very cruel deaths for the cause of Jesus Christ.

3. Today, let us remember the FAITH of those thousands upon thousands of Christians who were brutally tortured and executed at the command of such evil tyrants as NERO, TRAJAN , DOMITIAN and DIOCLETIAN.

4. Today, let us remember the FAITH of martyrs such as JIM ELLIOT......NATE SAINT......ROGER YOUDARIAN......PETE FLEMING and ED McCULLY, who gave their lives while trying to reach the Auca Indians with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. Today, let us remember the FAITH of PHYLLIS RINE, a graduate of Cincinnati Bible College, who in 1964, was
was marched out into the street along with a number of other missionaries in the CONGO of east Africa and mowed down with machine guns by militant revolutionaries.

6. And today, let us remember the FAITH of those nearly 200,000 Christians around the world who are martyred each year.

Perhaps these words of the late, Jim Elliot, sums up the very heart and spirit of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of Christ.

“He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

“Only one life ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

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Today, let us remember THE SOLDIERS who have died for our FREEDOM.

Let us remember THE SAINTS who have died for their FAITH.

And finally………………

(N E X T   P A G E )

III. Let Us Remember THE SAVIOR Who Died For Our FUTURE GLORY
1. I don’t know if you have ever thought about this, but there are a number of similarities between what JESUS, OUR SAVIOR did for us and what a SOLDIER does for his country.

   (A) Like a soldier, JESUS LEFT HOME.

   Just like a soldier gives up the comforts of home and goes off to a foreign land to fight a war, Jesus left the “comforts” of His heavenly home to come here to fight the greatest war that has ever been fought.

   (B) Like a soldier JESUS LAID ASIDE HIS HEAVENLY APPAREL

   When a soldier enters the military, he exchanges the clothes he wore as a civilian for a military uniform. Christ laid aside His Heavenly glory and put on “the uniform” of humanity.

   (C) Like a soldier, JESUS LIVED A LIFE OF LONELINESS

   When a soldier goes off to war, he feels the terrible loneliness of being away from his family and friends. He experiences some of the worst pain, suffering, sorrow and tragedy any human will ever experience.

   Likewise Jesus experienced a terrible loneliness. Isaiah 53:3 tells us, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.

   (D) Like a soldier, JESUS LAID DOWN HIS LIFE AS A SACRIFICE

   What is it that motivates a man or woman to become
a soldier and risk sacrificing their very lives for the lives of others? It is their belief in a cause much greater than themselves.

Christ believed in the greatest cause of all and that was the salvation of the souls of men. For that reason He was willing to sacrifice His own so that you and I might live forever.

2. You see, every LORD’S DAY is “Memorial Day” for those of us who are Christians. Every time you and I come around the LORD’S TABLE we “remember” the DEATH, the BURIAL the RESURRECTION and the RETURN of Jesus.

EVERY TIME YOU PARTAKE OF THE BREAD.
EVERY TIME YOU PARTAKE OF THE CUP.
EVERY TIME YOU PRAY A PRAYER.
EVERY TIME YOU SING A SONG OF PRAISE!

REMEMBER!  REMEMBER!

REMEMBER THE SAVIOR WHO DIED FOR OUR FUTURE GLORY!

Freedom Is Not Free
by Kelly Strong

I watched the flag pass by one day.
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
and then he stood at ease.
I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
He'd stand out in any crowd.
I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?
How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of TAPS one night,
When everything was still
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.
I wondered just how many times
That TAPS had meant "Amen,"
When a flag had draped a coffin
Of a brother or a friend.
I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.
I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
No, freedom isn't free.

Let us remember THE SOLDIERS who died for our FREEDOM.
Let us remember THE SAINTS who died for their FAITH.
Let us remember THE SAVIOR who died for OUR FUTURE GLORY.

LET US REMEMBER!