

5-28-23
Memorial day message:
THE GREAT FAITH OF GOD'S HEROES

This is a day that was originally set aside to remember those who died in the service of their country. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. Then after WW I it became a day for remembering and honoring any one who died in the service of our country.

One thing is sure.. it is naturally ingrained in us that past generations that made sacrifices should be remembered and honored. This is noble. This is good and this has by nature set in the hearts of mankind as a decent and proper thing to do.

As we think about the bravery of so many men who went to battle and made the ultimate sacrifice for their earthly country I cannot help but think about those who sacrificed for our eternal country. That city and country whose builder and maker is God himself.

In the book of Hebrews chapter 11 we read about the great heroes of the Christian faith. Many refer to this Chapter as the hall of fame of faith.

These are those who gave their lives for a Heavenly Country..

Following The Example of Biblical heroes of Faith we read:

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

Hebrews 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that [country] from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Then we read in Hebrews 12

Hebrews 12:1 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,

Hebrews 12:2 Looking 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.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

As we look back to these great heroes ... Jesus being the foremost.. we should not get weary in our minds...

Then consider.. they gave their all .. and you are still alive. You have not yet resisted unto blood..

Think about this, the Bible says to remember them and honor these.. the great spiritual heroes of our faith..

Let us consider what made these people mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 Heroes of faith worth remembering..

- I. They Looked For a City Whose Builder and Maker was God**
- II. They did not sell out for the pleasures of sin for a season..**
- III. They had a faith that would endure afflictions**
- IV. They were faithful unto death**
- V. They were an example to all of us to follow**

I. They Looked For a City Whose Builder and Maker was God

Their hope.. their faith is not in this world.. They were looking for another city whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

Jesus said his Kingdom was not of this world.

John 18:35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault [at all].

So often I think we forget that we should be looking for another country.. and another city...

This world is on the road to destruction. All we are called to do is salvage people. We need to be salt...

What made Jacob more noble than Esau? Esau only valued temporal things.

Jacob respected the eternal things and blessings.

II. They did not sell out for the pleasures of sin for a season..

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Hebrews 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

The world does offer carnal pleasures..

Sin is fun for a season..

Luke 16.. the rich man feasted sumptuously every day...

Consider.. all was well.. until he died.. And so many this is the case they think everything is all right.

God uses the foolish things of this world.. the weak... etc..

I Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

I Corinthians 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]:

I Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

I Corinthians 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

When sharing my testimony I had a teenager say to me.. YOU HAD YOUR FUN LET ME HAVE MINE...

III. They had a faith that would endure afflictions

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Hebrews 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

II Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Consider.. what men of God have endured for their faith..

Hebrews 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and [of] Barak, and [of] Samson, and [of] Jephthae; [of] David also, and Samuel, and [of] the prophets:

Hebrews 11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Hebrews 11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Hebrews 11:36 And others had trial of [cruel] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Hebrews 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and [in] mountains, and [in] dens and caves of the earth.

Hebrews 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

IV. They were faithful unto death

Hebrews 12:1 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,

Hebrews 12:2 Looking 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.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Consider how soldiers are commanded to be faithful unto death..

See how in the Civil War, soldiers just marched unto certain death..

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

This Memorial Day we honor those who served in the military and had to give their lives in that service.

Our human government could require such a sacrifice of men for a cause that many wonder, was it worth it?

Jack Green told me the story of when he came back from Vietnam, and he saw many of his fellow soldiers make this ultimate sacrifice. In fact he told me a story of how if it were not but for the grace of God he would have died. When he came back he saw the ungodly hippies mocking soldiers and calling them baby killers.. What our nation did to these who served was a disgrace.

Let it be known .. that will not happen with Christ..

In fact in the tribulation he will reward those who give but a cup of cold water to his persecuted preachers..

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold [water] only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Matthew 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Matthew 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

V. They were an example to all of us to follow

I Peter 2:19 For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

I Peter 2:20 For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God.

I Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Jesus died as an example..

He showed the way..

He is not asking anything of us that he has not already accomplished and done.. He left us an example..

There are many examples in the Bible of our relationship with Christ..

But the one that stands out more than any other.. is this idea of being a soldier for the Lord..

II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

II Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

II Timothy 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of [this] life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

II Timothy 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, [yet] is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking 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.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

When we get weary consider him ..

When you get discouraged consider him..

When you get downhearted consider him...

Conclusion:

As I meditated on what to preach .. I came over to the church and sat at the piano and thought about this verse:

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

Hebrews 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that [country] from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

All God's heroes, have been strangers and pilgrims in this land..

They all looked for the same thing. They waited for the Kingdom of God..

So it is with us today!!!

When we get discouraged by the crazy things we see our nation doing..

When we get discouraged by the insanity around us..

Imagine.. you can no longer say I am going to teach my children about the birds and the bees.. Today they are an odd thing indeed..

The other day.. I saw, a girl sitting in a car on the lap of another girl.. embracing her like a boyfriend.

We see an agenda.. it is crazy..

The Apostle Peter gives a commentary of what we should expect to see in the end times and warned that God has brought judgment on this world in the past and he will do so again in the future..

II Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

II Peter 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

II Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

II Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

II Peter 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [his] righteous soul from day to day with [their] unlawful deeds;)

II Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

II Peter 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous [are they], selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Folks we are looking for a city and a country whose builder and maker is our God!! Are you looking also!!!!

We who trust in him should not be at home in this world..

This Memorial Day let us remember that great cloud of witnesses that have gone on before use.. and run the race!!!

Hebrews 12:1 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,