

Remembering How Much It Costs

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Gen. 9:8-17

B. The origin of Memorial Day (ambiguous origins)

1. Before the end of the civil war, Southern women were decorating the graves of Confederate soldiers. In 1865, a local Pharmacist in Waterloo, N.Y., Henry Welles, put flowers on graves of soldiers. The next year (1866) Gen. John Murray took up the cause and organized the town. In 1868, Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, declared that May 30th should be a day to honor fallen soldiers. Flowers were put on every grave in Arlington National Cemetery. In the beginning, the holiday was called "Decoration Day." Typically, flags were flown at half-staff, graves were decorated with flowers, patriotic parades were held, lengthy memorial services at city halls and churches were held to honor the fallen, and a picnic was held on cemetery grounds. The sole purpose of the holiday was to remind us of the price others paid for the freedoms we enjoy.

2. Freedom is not free. It is purchased by the blood of fallen patriots.

3. More than 40 million men have served in our American military. More than 1.3 million men have died defending our freedom. That comes to more than 1.8 million gallons of blood shed to secure our liberty.

4. "Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance. America's collective consciousness demands that all citizens recall and be aware of the deaths of their fellow countrymen during wartime." (Article VFW website)

C. The object of a memorial is to cause the observer to remember.

1. Some events are of such great significance that we must pass them down to succeeding generations to insure they are never forgotten.

2. "A memorial draws minds back in the past to an event in which the observer did not participate, but from which he derives a benefit."

D. God is the Originator of memorials; they are appropriate and authorized.

1. The very first memorial was a rainbow - Gen. 9:16

2. In view of the science behind rainbows, something significant changed in that world. The bow reminded humankind of God's reaction to a sin saturated world, and of His promise to make it different

E. When God rescued Abraham's descendants from Egyptian slavery, He established a memorial so they would not forget -- the Passover.

1. Ex. 12:26-27 - God did not want Israel to forget their deliverance

a. It became an empty ritual, a religious holiday.

b. The memorial didn't cause them to obey God.

F. Jesus established a memorial of Christian's deliverance from bondage in sin.

1. Matt. 26:26-28 - Jesus does not want Christians to forget the consequences of our sins and the cost of our deliverance.

2. As with all memorials, there is a danger of it becoming an empty ritual.

3. This is what happened to Memorial Day. Once it was moved to the last Monday (1971), the meaning went away. It was reduced to a long weekend, the beginning of the summer vacation, and a day for picnics.

I. AMERICANS MUST REMEMBER THE COST OF FREEDOM

- A. We should remain aware of the price paid in order to appreciate our freedom.
 - 1. No other nation in the world and in history has ever enjoyed the freedoms and prosperity we enjoy.
 - 2. Few that have fought for their freedom have lived to enjoy it
- B. We have done nothing to deserve our freedom. It is a gift of God and those who built this nation
 - 1. Others fought and died to purchase it for us.
 - 2. Lack of gratitude is reflected by the lack of respect for our ancestors.
- C. Many have lost sight of the value of their freedoms and the price paid for it.
 - 1. By nature, people do not value what they did not earn or purchase.
 - 2. Those who fail to appreciate the value of their freedom also fail to protect and preserve it.
 - 3. A young person who is given a car treats it differently than one who worked and saved to buy it.
- D. Our freedoms are not guaranteed; they must be defended.
 - 1. Our freedoms are under attack today: external enemies who want to destroy us just because we are not like them, and internal enemies who want to take our freedoms and give the government control of our lives.
 - 2. Thomas Jefferson warned, "The cost of freedom is eternal vigilance."
 - 3. It is important to remember those who paid for our freedom - Rom. 13:7
 - 4. God gave America this freedom to use to His glory; use it or lose it.

II. CHRISTIANS MUST REMEMBER THE COST OF FREEDOM FROM SIN

- A. We have done nothing to earn or to deserve deliverance from our sins. The danger is failing to appreciate and remember the cost, and in forgetting, we will lose our freedom
- B. At one time, we allowed ourselves to be ensnared in sin.
 - 1. We've all found ourselves in a condition from which we could not free ourselves - Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 3:10, 23; Eph. 2:12
 - 2. There are unavoidable consequences for sin - Nahum 1:3; 2Thes. 1:7-8
 - 3. Like physical death, spiritual death, (separation from God) is a condition from which no one can rescue himself
 - a. Luke 17:10; Prov. 20:9; Psalm 49:7-8
- C. Only the precious blood of God's Only Begotten Son could pay our ransom.
 - 1. Matt. 1:21; Mark 10:45
 - 2. When tempted to turn back to live by the standard set by society, remember the cross and the price Jesus paid to free us from sin.
 - 3. Like the soldiers who died to make our nation free, God made the ultimate sacrifice to make us free from the bondage of sin.
 - a. Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1-10
 - 4. Remember the words of our veterans: "Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance."
 - 5. This is equally true of the sacrifice of Jesus; it must be remembered or it has no meaning to us. Comprehending and remembering the cost will change our lives.

6. Knowing how forgetful people tend to be, our Lord created and dedicated a memorial for us - 1Cor. 11:23-26
 7. Each week the Lord's Supper reminds of the consequences of our sins.
- D. Therefore, we must not forget the price that was paid for our transgressions.
1. It is essential; that we gather around the Lord's Table every Sunday.
 2. We must never allow the communion service to become an empty ritual
 3. It is not in performing the act that we approach God, but in the humble submission of our hearts before Him.
- E. Let us be grateful for the religious heritage into which we were born.
1. Our country - Prov. 14:34, 23:12
 2. The church and our local congregation
- F. Let us joyfully accept the responsibility laid on us.
1. As freedom was entrusted to us, so we must pass it on to those who will come after us.
 2. As others shared the free gift of eternal life with us, so we must share it with others.
 3. As this congregation was passed down to us, so we must pass it down to others who will come after us.
 4. As the truth was committed to us, so we must commit it to the next generation - 2Tim. 2:2