

“Lest Thou Forget...”

Deuteronomy 4:9

We are all prone to forget—We forget names... where we put things... birthdays and anniversaries. Our memories often need to be prompted. [There is an “app” for that.]

The Apostle Peter wrote, *“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in **remembrance** of these things... Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in **remembrance**... Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in **remembrance**”* (2 Pet. 1:12, 13, 15).

Words such as, “remember,” “memorial,” and “forget” occur over 250 times in the Bible. God knows how forgetful we are. Therefore, He commanded His people in the Old Testament to observe certain days as days of remembrance (Passover, Purim, Feast of Tabernacles).

In the New Testament God ordained the observance of “the Lord’s Supper,” as a way to remember what Christ did for us on the cross.

Tomorrow is “Memorial Day.” It was first observed on May 30, 1868 to honor those who died in the Civil War. Now, on Memorial Day, we honor the memories of all those who have died in military service of the United States. Memorial Day should NOT be just an occasion to give people a three-day weekend of leisure, but rather a call to remembrance of those who have suffered and died to ensure the political and religious freedoms we enjoy today.

Someone has said: A veteran is someone who at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to “The United States of America,” for an amount of “up to, and including his life.” On Memorial Day, we honor those whose check was cashed at the price of our freedom!

➡ I want to focus on **three important things we must never forget...**

I. Never forget the SOLDIERS who died for our FREEDOM.

- A. The danger of forgetting our heritage and those who made the ultimate sacrifice to make America the land of the free and the home of the brave.

➤ War casualties (2015¹):

- 4,435 Americans were killed in the Revolutionary War
- 6,765 soldiers died in the War of 1812
- 13,283 were killed in the Mexican War
- 2,446 died in the Spanish / American War
- In the Civil War, 498,332 soldiers were killed.
- 116,516 American soldiers were killed in World War I
- In World War II, 405,399 died,
- 54,246 died in Korea,
- 90,220 in Vietnam,
- 1,565 in the Persian Gulf War.
- 6,852 soldiers have died in the global war on terror (Iraq / Afghanistan).

➤ More than a million Americans have died in our wars, each one much loved by someone.

These men, and women are our real heroes! Everyone of those men, and women paid the ultimate price in support of and in defense of our freedoms! We are free today—free to pray... free to worship... free to speak... free to assemble... free to vote because of them!

B. A Man is not Dead until he is Forgotten...

How we need to remember these men and women! Soldiers like Marine Cpl. Jason Dunham, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the spring of 2004.

Dunham was serving with the 3rd Battalion in Iraq – a front-line unit, when he became engaged in a scuffle with an Iraqi who was holding a grenade that had already been disengaged. When Dunham realized this, he shouted a warning to his soldiers and flung his body on top of the grenade, covering it with his helmet.

Michael Phillips, a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, was embedded with Dunham's battalion. He recounts Dunham's act

¹ <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/many-americans-died-u-s-wars/>

of heroism in his book, *"The Gift of Valor."* Phillips writes: "He had less than five seconds to make a decision to sacrifice himself, and he didn't hesitate because he wanted to save his men, which he did." Dunham has been nominated to receive the military's highest honor—The Medal of Honor.

We must not forget!

II. Never forget the SAINTS who died for their FAITH.

Heb. 13:3—*"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."*

- A. We have a church and a Bible today because of Christians down through the ages who paid with their lives.
- B. We are Spoiled— Millions do not enjoy the liberties that we do! We take for granted the tremendous blessings we enjoy that were made possible because of the sacrifice of others.
- C. Persecution today:
 - 1. It is estimated 70 million Christians have been killed for their faith since the crucifixion of Christ according Italian journalist Antonio Socci, in his book *"The New Persecuted: Inquiries into Anti-Christian Intolerance in the New Century of Martyrs."* 45 million of these have died in the last century.
 - 2. Since 1983 over 2 million Christians have been killed by Muslims in the Sudan.
 - 3. *Christianity Today* (Aug 6, 2001) reported, about 100,000 of North Korea's estimated 500,000 Christians are imprisoned for their faith. Also, about

death by starvation, disease, or torture—in North Korea, Shin says.

While we sit here in our comfortable building, Christian brothers and sisters are suffering and dying for their faith around the world. God says REMEMBER THEM!

III. Never forget our SAVIOR who died for our FORGIVENESS (1 Cor. 11:24-26).

- A. The Lord's Supper is a "memorial service"—A call to remembrance of the supreme sacrifice of the greatest soldier who ever lived—The Lord Jesus Christ, who died to ensure the greatest freedom a person could enjoy—FREEDOM FROM SIN!
- B. What causes someone to stray from the Lord? I believe the main reason is they stray from the cross. We lose sight of it. We forget what the Lord did for us at Calvary. *"When I Survey"* (#53)

SUMMATION: Up until his death in 1973, Eddie Rickenbacker would visit an old broken pier on the eastern coast of Florida every Friday night. He carried a bucket of shrimp. Sea gulls flocked to him as he fed them shrimp from his bucket. Why did he do this?

Many years earlier in 1942, he was aboard a B-17 on a mission to New Guinea. But somewhere over the South Pacific his plane became lost beyond the reach of radio. Fuel ran dangerously low, so the pilot ditched their plane in the ocean.

For nearly a month Eddie and his companions

head, I could see the expression on their faces. They were staring at that gull. The gull meant food...if I could catch it.”

Eddie caught the gull. Its flesh was eaten. Its intestines were used for bait to catch fish. The survivors were sustained because one lone sea gull, uncharacteristically hundreds of miles from land, offered itself as a sacrifice.

Eddie Rickenbacker never forgot what had happened so that he and his buddies might be saved. Thereafter, every Friday evening, about sunset, on a lonely stretch along the eastern Florida seacoast, you could see him walking... white-haired, bushy-eyebrowed... slightly bent. His bucket filled with shrimp to feed the gulls... to remember that one lone sea gull which, on a day long past, gave itself as a sacrifice, so he might live.

Let's remember!

- Let's be thankful for those who have died for our freedom.
- Let's pray for our Brothers and Sisters in Christ who are suffering persecution.
- Let's surrender ourselves afresh to the One who made the greatest sacrifice—The Lord Jesus Christ that we might be saved.

Have you by faith received Him as your Lord and Savior?