

View

The Ultimate Sacrifice

I think it's kind of sad that Memorial Day has been shifted to the last Monday of the month so that it becomes part of a three-day holiday. You probably think I'm saying that because I'm a preacher and I get every Monday "off."

No, that's not it at all. I just think that this is a holiday that, because of what it represents, ought to have its own

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special day, like July 4th. In a way, it's a more significant day than the 4th because it is the day we remember those who gave their lives to preserve what July 4th set in motion.

I'll be speaking, in my sermon today, on being a living sacrifice, with a specific application to the family. But we are assembling in a fine building, with full stomachs and without any fear of government interference (so far) because many men and women were willing to make the "ultimate sacrifice," and die for the noble cause of liberty.

"Greater love has no one that this, that someone lay down his life for his friends," said Jesus (John 15:13). The determination to walk through the valley of the shadow of death to preserve our freedom demonstrates great love. Ironically, those thousands of men and women who died in war were willing to give up their freedom to preserve ours.

They didn't only give their best, they gave their all and many of them paid the steepest price to earn victory. Is there anything for which we should be more grateful? Is there anything ever accomplished in the history of man which should spark more thanksgiving in the hearts of those who have

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been saved from despotic rule and tyranny?

The answer to that is "no," and "yes." "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." I hope we will take a moment to remember the men and women who waded neck-deep into battle and laid their lives down so that we can continue to enjoy the freedom we enjoy today. We should thank God for them each day.

But there is something for which we should be even more grateful. The greatest love ever shown to man was demonstrated by an act that accomplished something no mere man can ever accomplish. The greatest act of sacrifice the world has ever seen secured a freedom that no army, no navy, and not a thousand men could win. The most significant victory was won by one man, in one daring act, for six hours on a cross, and we have been freed from sin.

So "Memorial Day" is important because it reminds us to think of those who sacrificed so much for us. Thank God for them.

But remember that "God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). That love warrants our daily "memorial" and gratitude.

DP

ANOTHER TYPO? UGH!

BY W. FRANK WALTON

"We all stumble in many ways" (Ja 3:2)

"I hate typos! This is getting irritating!! I thought I had proofed the article...and it seems like I'm still having these pesky typos left in..."

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you there reading my thoughts to myself....

Okay, let me clarify the above. In the devotional, "Momma's Cake," I used a poem about small, seemingly insignificant acts of service being used for God. One line was "Rachel had a string." This must have puzzled some of you because some wrote about where this was found in the Bible. (My wife thought I had meant that she had a hook in Jacob's nose and led him around!)

I confess that Rachel's string is not mentioned in the Bible. Actually, the line should have read: "Rahab had string." I had the correct version at the church office, but I copied a version off the internet that had the wrong person listed. Ugh! I didn't check close enough. (In case you didn't know, "ugh!" is Greek for "I'm really annoyed!")

Also, there are been various typos that have cropped up in some of my different articles, business cards printed, etc. that "tick me off." "How did that get there? I thought I had proofed this!" I could say it's not my fault and that the typo fairies are sneaking them in, but we all know better!

Before some of you more merciful readers think I'm beating myself up unnecessarily (while the grammatical purist among you are rejoicing that I have been led to repentance), I think it's time to make some kind of application.

James acknowledges, in dealing with problems of the unruly tongue, that we *"stumble in many ways" (Ja 3:2)*. We, as limited and imperfect human beings, do not function flawlessly. We make mistakes. We never reach the plateau of sinless perfection in this life, despite our best efforts (1 Jn 1:8, Phil 3:12). Heaven is where we'll be *"made perfect" (Heb. 12:23)*. Now, Jesus understands that *"the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41)*.

Yet, we can improve. The church at Thyatira had significant problems with tolerating a Jezebel, but the Lord still commended them that *"your deeds of late are greater than at first" (Rev. 2:19)*. Success is not where we are but rather it is found in the direction we are moving. We are responsible to mature and grow (Phil. 3:15, 2 Pet 3:18).

If you are like me, we have to learn to slow down and be more careful. Like Coach John Wooden has said, "Be quick, but don't hurry!" He also would say, "If you don't have time to do it right the first time, when will you have time to correct it?" Indeed, whatever we do is worth doing *"with all your might" (Ecc. 9:10)*.

We realize that mistakes and oversights are not the end of the world. It is far more important that we are giving priority to obeying God daily in overcoming sin. We cannot let the fear of messing up stop us in the pursuit of facing up to our weaknesses and turning to the Lord for strength, motivation and forgiveness when we need it.

Thankz for reding my artecul ;-)

Via Focal Point, a free weekly e-mail from Focus Magazine. Contact Frank Walton at wfwalton@juno.com to subscribe.