

View

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

May 24, 2020

Today we remember...

They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

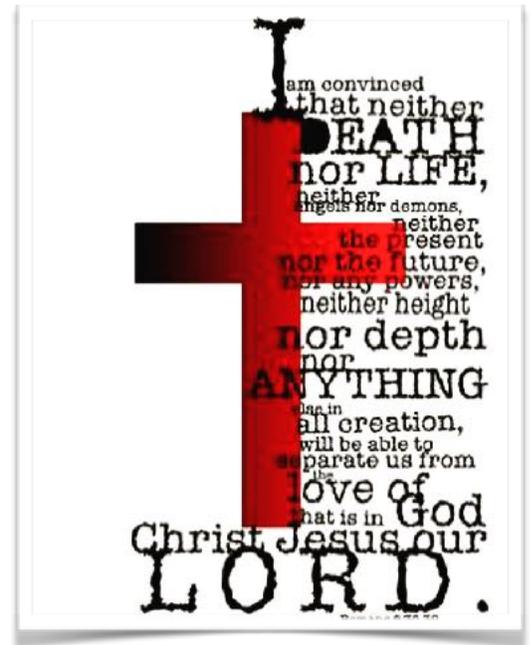
When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:15-30





Remember...

The American Cemetery, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg

The American Constitution has been in the news frequently of late, not only in reference to some alleged abuses of power by certain government officials but, closer to home, because of its guarantees of religious freedom. For the first time in my life, I've been told by elected individuals in America that I am not allowed to assemble to worship God. On its face, that is a violation of the First Amendment of the United States constitution adopted into the Bill of Rights in 1791. As a reminder, here it is, verbatim:

Congress* shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

I'm not bringing this up to rant about how the government is interfering with our right to assemble right now. We are refraining from exercising our constitutional right because we love people and do not want anyone to get sick or make someone else sick.

I'm bring it up because Memorial Day was established to help us remember that this basic right, a right we take for granted, has been bought and paid for by the blood of thousands of men in two world wars. Without their sacrifice, who knows what kind of tyranny we would be facing in our attempt to worship God?

On our trip to Europe in 2018, there were many beautiful sites, iconic places and breathtaking views. But there were also two of the most sobering sites I have seen in my lifetime. One of those was the Nazi parade grounds in Nuremberg, Germany. The cement platform where Hitler stood rallying the crowd with his hysterical rhetoric still stands. As a student of WWII, especially the European theater where my dad fought, it was strange to stand on the same ground where it all started. That "monument" to unchecked power and evil is now despised by the German people but it remains as a reminder. You can even climb the stairs and stand where Hitler stood. That gives me the creeps but there was someone up there when we visited. If you are seen doing the Nazi salute, you will be arrested (we

learned one young man was arrested not long before we got there — but he was taking a selfie).

That site was chilling. There was another that was simply somber. The American Cemetery in Luxembourg stands as a monument to soldiers, known and unknown, who were killed in action on the European continent. The famous Battle of the Bulge took place not far from there. These men saved us from tyranny and preserved our rights.

Christians have served God throughout the ages under all kinds of circumstances. Many of our brethren were persecuted mercilessly by evil men who hated Christians. All of the apostles were killed, with the exception of John, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, which was probably a fate worse than death (for him, not for us).

We live in a nation where — under normal circumstances — we can meet any time and anywhere. The health crisis and subsequent order prohibiting our assemblies has convicted me: *All my years, I've have taken this privilege for granted.* No more.

Today, let's remember our Lord who died to assure a home in heaven for us. And let's also remember the men who laid down their lives to preserve the precious freedoms we enjoy — freedom to gather and talk about what God has done for us — perhaps with even more enthusiasm than before.



Nuremberg, Germany. The bombed out remains of the stands at the Nazi parade ground. The red circle indicates where Hitler stood making his speeches. Thousands died to save us and many others from his tyranny.

*The First Amendment has been interpreted by the Supreme Court as applying to the entire federal government even though it is only expressly applicable to Congress. Furthermore, the Court has interpreted the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as protecting the rights in the First Amendment from interference by state governments.

Wait. Who said you have to be an expert before you offer your thoughts on a topic?

There is a theory that unless you are an “expert” in some area — say, science or philosophy or epidemiology — you really shouldn’t be speaking on that topic at all. That privilege belongs only to the learned. **OK... do you remember...?**

“Experts” built the Titanic. And the Hindenburg blimp. And the Boeing 800 Max.

“Experts” built the Florida University pedestrian bridge that collapsed. Errors by the “experts” at _____ Co. were cited as the cause.

“Experts” have been informing us daily about the coronavirus. But the facts keep changing and the most high profile “expert,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, just said that the stay at home order could cause irreparable damage if it continues too long. Not long ago, he was proposing that we may have to stay inside until there is a vaccine.

I haven’t found that experts meet both these criteria on any subject of even minor importance — and to be fair, most “experts” wouldn’t begin to claim they have all the answers. That would brand them as insane.

“Experts” in every discipline disagree frequently and the smart ones use it to improve their expertise.

For example, how many health experts have been interviewed in the last 60 days? How many of them are saying the exact same thing? That’s a rhetorical question.

I’ve met a few so-called, and often self-proclaimed, “experts” in my life who seem totally devoid of common sense. And I’ve learned more lessons of value from spending time with men who would not claim to be experts in anything. Some of them barely got through the 8th grade, but they learned valuable life lessons from *experience* — *actually doing things in the real world*. I learned more from them, and men and women like them, than I learned getting my 100-plus units of college credit (today, those units and \$4.50 may get me a cup of coffee).

“Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

I Corinthians 1:20

I respect him for changing his mind. I do. He is an expert who was willing to listen to someone who had another — perhaps a non-medical expert — view of the situation and spoke up. Bully for Dr. Fauci!

With all due respect, the coronavirus experts have spoken with great confidence on things that turned out not to be true (can you spell **m-a-s-k**?)

I love people who have expertise and I turn to them often. Without them, I would be at a loss in many areas of my life.

But when you tell me that a man or woman is unqualified to speak on a topic because he or she is not an expert, then you need to consider a few things. Obviously, you are painting yourself into a corner. You are implying that (1) *you* are an expert on everything *you* comment on and that, (2) you can only learn something from a person who has certain credentials that some entity in the world has told you he earned and is, *voila*, an “expert.” But is he?

It seems that if the experts are the only ones who can be believed then (a) *every expert on the same subject should agree on every particular of that subject or you have to choose which expert you’re going to believe*. It’s also true that the expert — since he or she is an *expert* — *should be able to answer authoritatively any and all questions on the topic on which they are an expert*. If they can’t, when do we start deducting points from their “expert” resume?

This gets deadly serious when we consider how people treated Jesus and the apostles. Educational arrogance flourished in their day.

The “experts” disregarded Jesus because he wasn’t one of *their* experts. See John 7:15

People put down the apostles because they were “uneducated and untrained men.” See Acts 4:13

Paul was highly educated but not an “expert” to the high brow Athenians. He was just a “babblers.”

See Acts 17:18

Who are the real “experts”? That’s a really good question. The term “expert” is relative and true experts are always open to learning and growing. Christian Yelich is an expert in baseball, a “pro.” He was the runner-up Major League Baseball MVP in 2019.

And, no, he is not on the Dodgers. Sadly.

Yelich was answering someone on Twitter who told another fan that he should keep his mouth shut about some baseball issue because the fan isn’t a “pro.”

Yelich, the consummate pro, said: “It’s not about who knows more or less, the problem is the unwillingness to learn and discuss from both sides. I’ve learned from many who aren’t ‘pros’ that we should always be willing to improve and listen no matter who you are.”

Peter said to Christians who had heard it all before, “I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder...” II Peter 3:1

There is always more to learn...