

Memorial Day and Remembering

May 26, 2019

Hebrews 13:5-16

Tomorrow we Americans celebrate Memorial Day. It is a day in which we *remember*. It was back in 1971 during the Presidency of Richard M. Nixon that the date was set as the last Monday in May.

Memorial Day was once known as Decoration Day, the day set apart to honor, celebrate and remember Americans who had fought and died in the Civil War. The very first Decoration Day was held on May 30, 1868.

Here's the story. At the close of the Civil War, on April 9th, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln arrived at Richmond, VA, the capital of the Confederate States. But instead of marching through the city as a conquering hero who had defeated the southern General Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, Lincoln chose a better way. He entered Richmond on foot holding the hand of a little boy; his son Tad, who turned twelve years old that same day. He entered the Appomattox Courthouse, the building used by Jefferson Davis as his headquarters, and proceeded to take a seat behind Davis' desk, folded his arms, laid his head on his arms on the desk and wept – for a very long time; weeping for those who had lost their lives in the battles of the Civil War. That folks, was the first true Memorial Day. And, as you all likely know, ten days later, on April 14, 1865 Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theater, 154 years ago this past month.

Memorial Day is a day to remember.

Today, I'd like to go to the Bible and see what God says about remembering. Please open your Bible today to Genesis chapter nine.

I've titled today's sermon "Memorial Day And Remembering." Shall we pray?

Remembering. We all have both pleasant and unpleasant memories. What is a memory anyway? Isn't it a bridge to the past? And isn't it a connection to something important? The LORD has a lot to say about remembering. And, in my research this past week for today's sermon, I discovered that the LORD speaks first about remembering in Genesis and the last time He speaks about remembering is in the Book of Revelation.

First, then, President Abraham Lincoln remembered the thousands of young men who had died in the Civil War and expressed his own connection to them as he cried at the Courthouse in Appomattox in Richmond, VA. And I'm sure, when you remember a loved one who has left this world, you have had this very same experience of crying as you remembered them.

Second, the original Decoration Day was held May 30, 1868 when family members recalled their sons and husbands and fathers. They too made a bridge to the past by decorating the graves of their loved ones with flowers; again, something you've done as well.

Today, we no longer call it Decoration Day. Today, it's Memorial Day. Today, it's the day we remember all those who died in war for our country and for our liberty. So, really, Memorial Day is a day to remember and to appreciate all those in our military, the Army, the Coast Guard, the Marines, the Navy, and the Air Force; but especially those who have given their lives on our behalf, a total of approximately 1.6 million lives over the past 154 years.

Third, God created the original bridge to the past. Please open to that first bridge, which is found in Genesis chapter nine.

Find with me Genesis 9:8. And as I read, notice that the LORD is the one Who brings up remembering, and He is the One Who connects to the past; verse 8.

Genesis 9:8 *“And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, (9) And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; (10) And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. (11) And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.*

(12) And God said, this is the token [sign] of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: [in other words, forever]. (13) I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token [sign] of a covenant between me and the earth. (14) And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

*(15) And **I will remember my covenant**, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. (16) And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, **that I may remember the everlasting covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.*

(17) And God said unto Noah, This is the token [sign] of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”

The most devastating event in the history of mankind was the worldwide flood. The flood destroyed all of the human race except for eight people, the family of Noah. Just sixteen hundred years after He created Adam and Eve, the sins of mankind had become so egregious that God wiped

out nearly one hundred per cent of the world's population. We had so corrupted ourselves that God had to literally purge the earth by a worldwide flood. Now, whenever a rainbow appears in the sky, there's a Memorial Day in Heaven.

So, yes, a memory is a bridge to the past. But, it's also a bridge from the past into the present. God says that every time a rainbow appears after a rain, He remembers the covenant He made with all the creatures of the earth.

How amazing is that? God, the Creator of everything, reminds Himself of His promise to never again cut Himself off from the human race by flooding the earth. God is Absolute Power. He's the Creator. And He's also the Perfection of mercy. So He chooses to remember our need for mercy every single time a rainbow appears in the sky.

That's the reason for rainbows. That's why rainbows appear after the rain. The LORD says *He* will remember something. *He* will remember this one promise each and every time a rainbow appears. And He says it three times. “*This is the token [sign] of the covenant ...*”

The KJV uses the word “token.” A token is a sign. A sign always points to something else.

You see, with every, God recalls a promise He made four thousand years ago (4367 years ago). On His Memorial Day, He remembers His own promise; the promise to never again destroy the earth with a flood; a promise He made way to the entire human race.

You see, God had flooded the earth because of the intense wickedness of the human race; sort of like the wickedness of today. Yet, whenever He sets the rainbow in the sky, *He* remembers the promise of His constant goodness that He would never again flood the world to destroy its people. When the rainbow shows up, the LORD remembers “the everlasting covenant” He made between Himself and

every living creature. So, the first, true Memorial Day was designed by God when He set the rainbow in the clouds.

First, Abraham Lincoln wept at Richmond.

Second, the original Decoration Day was held May 30, 1868 with flowers at the area cemeteries.

Third, God created the original bridge to the past.

Fourth, God created a bridge for us from today back to the Cross of Christ. You know it as the Table of Remembrance. Turn with me to the New Testament Book of Luke and chapter twenty-two.

Luke 22:11 *“And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? (12) And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. (13) And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.*

(14) And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. (15) And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: (16) for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

*(17) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: (18) for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you: **this do in remembrance of me.**”*

Memorial Day is clearly a bridge to the past. It's a connection. We remember a time in our history when over a half a million lives were lost in war. And our bridge to the past is our celebration of Memorial Day once each year.

But, there is clearly a much more important Memorial Day for every Christian. Our connection, our bridge to the past is a table. Jesus said “This do in remembrance of Me.”

At the LORD's Table, we are connected to the Cross of Christ.

Now, please go with me to I Corinthians chapter eleven.

I Corinthians 11:17 *“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. (18) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. (19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*

(20) When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. (21) For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. (22) What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

(23) For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: (24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

(25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

(27) Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

(29) For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. (31) For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. (32) But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

On Memorial Day there's always a remembering of those who died. In the flood, nearly the entire world died. In the Civil War, some six hundred thousand died. But here in this bridge to the past, we remember just One Person Who died. And that, of course, was Jesus.

But look with me at LORD's Table as a connection to the Son of God hanging on the Cross. You see, the Christian's Memorial Day is Communion.

Look again at verse twenty-four. I Corinthians 11:24 *"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do **in remembrance of me**. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, **in remembrance of me**."*

First, we remember the Person Who died on the Cross. Jesus Christ; God, the Son, became the Perfect Sacrifice for your sins and my sins. Jesus' death became our death so that we will not have to pay the debt of our sin.

Second, we remember the Purpose for His death.

Did you know that the purpose of Christ's death was so that you could be perfected forever?

Hebrews 11:14 *"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."*

And, did you know that your sins will never be remembered against you again? Hebrews 11:17 *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."*

And did you know that your heart has been sprinkled from an evil conscience? Hebrews 11:22 *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience ..."*

Folks, there is no greater Memorial Day than the day we partake of the LORD's Table. We who are saved have been perfected forever. Not one sin will ever be remembered

against us again. And our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Will you ever again neglect coming to the LORD's Table because something is more important than these things?

And third, at His Table, we remember the Power of His death. We have fellowship with God because of the Cross.

Memories, as I said are a bridge to the past. But they are also a bridge from the past into the present.

The Table is a table for eating and enjoying fellowship with those we eat with. We have fellowship with Him and we have fellowship with each other. And it's at the Table of the LORD that we show that fellowship.

So, Memorial Day is a day to remember.

First, Abraham Lincoln wept at Richmond.

Second, the original Decoration Day was held May 30, 1868 with flowers at the area cemeteries.

Third, God created the original bridge to the past.

Fourth, God created a bridge for us from today back to the Cross of Christ.

You may not have a memory of someone who gave his life in one of our American wars. But, you can certainly honor those who died on your behalf.

And yet, the most important One to give His life for you is Jesus Christ. Will you ever again neglect His Table? The most important death to ever occur happened the day Jesus died at Calvary. And His death was for you and for me.

Today, remember the connection God made to the past. That connection was the Cross. It was for you He died. It was for you He rose. It was for you He ascended and is today seated in Heaven. It was for you.

Remember. Appreciate. And be grateful.

Now, as we close, let me remind you of the Main Message of the Scriptures.

1. Man is a sinner. The wages for sin is death.

2. God provided a Savior in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. He died for your sins.

3. When you repent of my sins and receive Jesus Christ as your LORD and Savior, you are completely forgiven and guaranteed a place in Heaven.

4. Will you trust His Son as your Savior?

This is probably the greatest passage of Scripture Bible. It's John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."*

Will admit you are a sinner and not deserving of His Love. Will you admit you are a sinner and deserving of His Judgment? Then, tell God that you believe He sent His Son to die as your Substitute and that you want to be forgiven of all your sins. He will certainly receive you and grant you permission to enter into His Kingdom someday.

Here's what it means to repent and believe.

- To "repent" means "to change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God's free gift of salvation."
- To "believe" means "to simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins."

Today is Memorial Day. But it also, the Day of Salvation. Today you can repent (change your mind) about God, Christ, Sin, and Salvation and find eternal life. Today is your day to trust Christ alone for His free salvation. Will you trust Him?

My question to you today is this. Will you put your trust in the One Who paid the penalty for all your sins 2000 years ago when He died on a Cross on the hill called Calvary?

Will admit you are a sinner and not deserving of His Love. Will you admit you are a sinner and deserving of His Judgment? Then, tell God that you believe He sent His Son

to die as your Substitute and that you want to be forgiven of all your sins. He will certainly receive you and grant you permission to enter into His Kingdom someday.

Here is a simple salvation prayer. "Thank you for the work of Jesus Your Son who paid my entire debt so that I can enjoy my full debt cancelled. LORD, thank you for the forgiveness of all my sins. Thank you that Your forgiving me is full and complete. Amen"

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 803 "If My People"