

MEMORIAL DAY 2010  
 "NEVER FORGET"  
 Exodus 12.1-14

Isn't that an amazing passage of Scripture?  
 God tells the story, establishes a ritual, sets up a special day,  
 so the Israelites would never forget what he was going to do for them.

I don't know about you but it's getting easier and earlier to forget things.  
 I spend more time looking for my keys in the morning than it takes me to get ready for work.

That is unless I wear my glasses instead of my contacts.  
 The contacts are always in the same place,  
 my glasses-your guess would even be as good as mine.

This forgetfulness has gotten so bad  
 that the other day that I started to walk up the road to Wiley Lake  
 and turned around to go back and get my phone.

The thing is, I had forgotten that,  
 as I was walking, I was talking  
 to someone on the very phone,  
 the phone that I thought I had forgotten.

Well maybe forgetting a phone isn't as important as forgetting other things.

I read where genius scientist Albert Einstein, Professor at Princeton,  
 called the office of the Dean of Princeton Graduate School and asked,  
 "May I speak to Dr. Einstein please?"

The secretary said he was not in.  
 Dr. Einstein then ask, "Could you tell me where he lives?"  
 She said she couldn't do this because Dr. Einstein wished to have his privacy respected.

Dr. Einstein then whispered, "I'm Dr. Einstein, and I have forgotten where my house is."  
 Dr Einstein forgot something you would think he would never forget.

We all could name a number of things we should never forget.  
 I'll start with these three today.

We must never forget our soldiers, their families, and their sacrifices  
 they have made that we might live in a free country.  
 Now keep this in mind.

The stories I'll are not to elicit sympathy for them and their families.  
 I tell these stories so that we never forget to encourage and support our soldiers and their families.

We must never forget those family and friends  
that sacrifice their time, effort, and money that we might enjoy those freedoms.

And we must never forget that Jesus sacrifice his life that we might have freedom from sin and death.

If we forget any of those things we'll let down our guard and risk losing our freedoms.  
We'll give license to our liberty and become a whole lot less grateful.  
The less grateful, less life and the more self-absorbed we'll become.

If someone says 9/11, most of us are reminded of September 11<sup>th</sup> of 2001  
when the buildings of the World Trade Center were attacked and destroyed.  
That day should be difficult for most of us to forget but some of us will.

To help us never forget the the United States Navy  
has taken 24 tons of steel from the ruins of the trade center  
and used it to build a 684 foot amphibious assault ship called the, USS New York.

It is the fifth in a new class of warships disgned for missions  
that include special operations against terrorist.  
It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat ready Marines.

It was a very sacred and spiritual moment, a moment they'll never forget  
for the steel workers as the steel for the ship was being pour into the mold.

The ship's motto... you guessed it, "Never Forget."

We don't want to forget 9/11, not so that we can extract revengeance,  
but that we might in the future be ready and able to protect the freedoms we have.

Major General John Logan wanted to make sure that we never forget  
the sacrifices of the civil war soldiers.

In 1868 inspired by the people of Waterloo, NY, decorating the graves of union soldiers,  
he declared May 30<sup>th</sup> as Decoration Day.

HE said, "We should guard their graves with with sacred vigilance...  
Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitiors and fond mouners..."

Anyway after WW1, Decoration Day was to include the graves of all men and women  
of the armed forces that we might acknowledge their sacrifices as well.

When you think about it in our country  
"Thanksgiving is a day when we pause to give thanks for the things we have  
and Memorial Day is a day when we pause to give thanks  
to the people who fought for the things we have."

Yet some of us will forget tomorrow is Memorial Day.  
Well, maybe not forget that tomorrow is Memorial day.

But forget the significance of memorial day.  
We'll picnic, party, have our parades, and plan our outings but forget the real meaning of the day.

Some might even ask the question in the Mike Lester cartoon.

Dad has the car packed with food and recreation stuff checks off his list,  
"Hotdogs, hamburgers, buns, mustard, catsup, beer, soft drinks..."  
and then asks, "Honey, what are the flowers for?"  
In the next clip he is standing in front of a grave and says, "To say thanks!!!"

The vetran in the wheelchair (photo) will never forget.  
As the flag parades by he's standing, but no one else is.

Unless we're really part of the family, or have experinced war;  
we can hardly understand the emotional and financial pain,  
we can hardly understand what it like to live with a injury or life without a loved one

we can hardly understand the enormous price that families pay  
when the work of a husband or wife, daddy or mommy,  
brother or sister, employee or employer, friend or neighbor...  
when their work becomes war.

The widow of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James Cathey (phota), in great grief,  
sleeps by his casket the night before his burial as a Marine stands watch.

Also heart wrenching is a picture of her touching the casket with her pregant stomach (photo).

And South Dakota has it's own real American hero.  
Staff Sargent Shane Barnard, from DeSmet, SD  
who sacrificed his life in the war against terrorism.

Shane as part of the 787<sup>th</sup> Ordinance Company,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in Zabul Province in Afghanistan  
died as a resutl of wounds sustianed  
when he stepped on an imporvised explode divise.

Staff Sargent Barnard was a highly decorated soldier.  
This was his second deployment.  
His first was in Iraq as a combat medic.  
For his second he was reclassified and trained  
as an explosive ordinance disposal specialist.  
He wore an 80# suit and it was his job to diffuse unexploded bombs.

As we think of him as a person, we know he is survived by a wife and three children.  
He had a Lab and avidly hunted deer and waterfowl.  
And people said he was very easy to get along with and yet one who always looked for a challenge.

Obviously his family will never forget him.

And I'm sure the Lin Hamill family will never forget him as well.  
Here is more of Shane's story.

In a blog Lin Hamill writes,  
"Last fall my son arrived home from Iraq in time for the birth of his daughter.  
Then 5 weeks later the Army notified him  
that he would be deployed to Afghanistan in February.  
Our family was heartsick that he would leave for a new deployment so soon.

Then another compassionate soldier hero stepped forward  
and volunteered to go in our son's place.  
That soldier was SSGT Shane Barnard.  
That makes him more than your ordinary hero.

Lin Hamill is grateful and will not forget.  
Like cartoon character in the cemetery  
watching his granddaughter put flowers on the grave,  
he might even say,  
"You military heroes gave up all your tomorrows so I could have mine."

**Also on this Memorial Day,  
we want to never forget the sacrifices of family, friend, teachers, preacher,  
and others that we might enjoy our freedoms.**

This became very real to me a couple of weeks ago.  
We gathered at the cemetery where my folks are buried.  
I guess you could call it an early memorial day.

I had forgotten but I hope I'll never forget how fortunate I was.  
I had two very loving, giving, and forgiving parents as well as great and godly in-laws.

They would have sacrificed everything for their children.  
Believe me they were parents whose love bore all, believed all, hoped all, and endured all.

We were taught to serve others, to work hard, and to love God.  
I'll never forget some of the countless hours I worked with my father  
and his calming presence in sixth grade when I thought the world was coming to an end.

I'll never forget my mother fixing my favorite meal when she was very sick  
And her faithfulness in being at all of our ballgames.  
She only missed when two of us played at the same time.  
She was an amazing woman but couldn't be in two places at once.

But most that day a couple of weeks ago,  
I remembered and hoped I'll never forget how they loved our children.

Maybe it was because I'm a grandpa now and our children are all having children.  
Someone said what I was thinking, "wouldn't mom and dad enjoy all these grandkids."

I don't know whether or not you have or had loving or caring parents...  
 but I hope there is someone who sacrificed something for you or invested in you.  
 If not, I pray God will redeem those painful experiences.  
 And if not, then I know there is at least one who has sacrificed something for you, and that is Jesus.

**We must never forget, that Jesus sacrificed his life to win our freedom over sin and death.**

In Exodus 12.14, God was in essence telling the Israelites never to forget,  
 even setting up a day to help them remember his work in their lives,  
 that he delivered them from the slavery of the Egyptians to freedom in the Promised Land,

**“This is a day you are to commemorate,  
 for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance.”**  
 “Day to commemorate” can be translated memorial day.

And for us any day, every day is a good day to never forget,  
 A good day to remember, that Jesus endured the suffering and shame  
 of the cross on our behalf for the joy that would be found,  
 that we might have a real and eternal life,  
 that we remember and celebrate.

Max Lacado says it well;  
 Jesus was the General who died in the place of a private,  
 The king who sacrificed for his subjects,  
 The master who served his servants.

Jesus didn't just assume the blame, he seized the sin.  
 Jesus didn't carry a rifle or a sword in his hands,  
 Nor did his finger ever push a button to send a missile or blow up a bomb.

But his hands held nails, nails for our sins  
 And his body bore the bullets, the blades,  
 And the blasts of our brokenness, our hatred and hostility, our rebellion.

Jesus didn't wear medals on his chest, he wore stripes on his back.  
 He didn't wear a helmet, he wore a crown of thorns on his head.  
 And his head held that crown of thorns because  
 His heart held his Father's love,  
 His father's love for you and I.

Today let's not forget, let's vow never to forget that love.  
 Never forget the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families.  
 Never forget the sacrifices and investments in us, of family and friends  
 And never forget the sacrifice and suffering of the savior for us.

Let's stand and sing “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” renewing our trust in his promise and provision for us.

