

A Cause Worth Dying For

- II Corinthians 5:14-21

- **This weekend we are celebrating a very special time in our country, as we celebrate & honor those who have paid the ultimate price for the freedoms that we cherish today.**
- **Though many consider war as something we should not be a part of, all throughout history you will find that people have been called upon time & time again to stand up & protect the things that they cherish. This country is no different.**
- **And for that reason, we are honored today to remember the many who have sacrificed greatly, but specifically those who have laid their life down so that you & I might be free.**
 - The scriptures remind us, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” – John 15:13
- **As you think about this verse & you think about the commitment to lay down your life voluntary for others, it is for this reason that the freedoms we have today should be so valuable to us.**
 - Many today do not participate in voting, yet men have given their lives so that we might have the freedom to vote.
 - Going to Church & the privilege of holding God’s Word are freedoms that have cost & are continuing to cost men & women their lives.
- **As we think about Memorial Day & all that it represents, I want us to look this morning at some of those who have given their life for us.**

I. Our Forefathers

- When the 56 Signers of The Declaration of Independence attached their signatures to that document, they were not just signing another piece of paper & this was not a commitment to be taken lightly. By signing this document, they were committing treason against the British Crowne. The penalty for treason was death by hanging. And remember, a great British fleet was already at anchor in New York Harbor.
 - But this was not about a rebellion, position or claiming authority; this was about principle that had brought these men to Philadelphia.
- And there was a high price for these men willingly signing the Declaration of Independence.
 - Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died.
 - Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned.
 - Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army, another had two sons captured.
 - Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or the hardships of the Revolutionary War.
- These were men just like you & I.
 - Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists.
 - Eleven were merchants,
 - Nine were farmers and large plantation owners, men of means, well educated.
 - Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.
 - Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his

family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

- Vandals or soldiers or both, looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.
 - Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.
 - He gave two sons to the officer corps in the Revolutionary Army. They were captured and sent to a British prison hulk afloat in New York harbor where 11,000 American captives were to die.
 - John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his grist mill were laid waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.
 - Morris and Livingston suffered similar fates.
- **These were men who understood the price of freedom, far better than we do today. These were men who believed in the freedom of man enough to not only talk about it & write about it, but they were willing to lay their lives down so that men one day might experience true freedom.**
 - It was this belief that led them to write, "And for the support of this Declaration with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."
 - **They never died physically fighting for our freedom with guns, but these are true heroes of America b/c they lived in bondage & understood what dictatorship was, yet they sought for democracy & freedom for all in this new country.**

II. The American Soldier / First Responders

- **US Department of Veteran Affairs - America's Wars Total (1775 -)**
 - U.S. Military Service during Wartime 41,892,128
- **The Washington Post reported in November 2013 of the deaths of our military since 1775:**
 - Total US Deaths – 1,343,812
 - Wounded – 1,529,230
 - Missing – 38,159
 - This is part of the price when it comes to freedom.
- **Every single day, we have brave men & women all around this world who give at least a portion of their lives to protect the freedoms & the people of this country; but some give all.**
 - If duty calls for them to sacrifice their lives for a fellow brother or an American citizen, they voluntarily give of themselves so that others might enjoy freedom.
- **In recent years, the issue of terrorism has been focused on not just in other countries, but now here in these United States.**
 - USS Cole Bombing - 2000
 - Terror Attacks – 2001
 - Shoe Bomb Plot – 2001

- Boston Marathon Bombing – 2013
- **These are just a few that have had significant casualties. There are numerous others that have been stopped or have resulted in no casualties or injuries.**
- **We say Thank You to our military and our first responders and all those who are willing to stand up & protect this great nation & its citizens each & every day because they desire for us to remain free.**

III. Jesus Christ

➤ READ SCRIPTURE

- **Though some are willing to die for us, Jesus was willing to not only die for our sins, but He took His life again so that we might claim the victory through His finished work at Calvary's cross.**

a. Jesus Died For All (vv.14-15)

- i. Our forefathers stood up for those desiring to be free.
- ii. Our soldiers defend the freedoms & liberties of the American people.
- iii. But Jesus did not die for just the American people, not just the Jewish people or those who were good enough or desired to be free.
- iv. In verses 14-15 we are told that Jesus died for all. Jesus died for everyone. He died in the place of, on behalf of, or for the benefit of, everyone.
- v. No matter who you are this morning or what your background is, Jesus died for you, He died in your place, for your benefit.
 1. Matt. 20:28 – “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
 2. I Tim. 2:5-6 – “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”
- vi. Jesus Christ died for us b/c of His great love for us.
 1. John 3:16
- vii. Though God wants to have a relationship with each of us, the only way that is possible is through the blood of Jesus Christ.

b. Jesus Died To Set Us Free Eternally (vv.18-19, 21)

- i. The freedoms that we have in America cannot set other people free in other countries. But the freedom that we possess through Jesus Christ is sufficient to reach any person who will trust in Him.
 1. John 8:36 – “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”
- ii. The freedoms that we have today can potentially be taken away in the future through our own hands or the pursuit of others. But the freedom that we have through Jesus Christ, no man can ever take from us.
 1. Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- iii. Through His freedom,
 1. We have been reconciled. (vv.18-19)
 - a. Because of our sin, we were separated from God.
 - i. God is holy and pure; our sin places us at war with God.

- ii. But thankfully, we are told in Isaiah 53 said that it was for our sins that Jesus died.
 - 1. I John 2:2 – “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

- iii. When we make Jesus our Lord, He makes things right between us and God. We receive God’s grace into our lives.

- 1. Romans 5:9-10 – “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

- b. We are a new creation. (v.17)

- i. Verse 17 tells us that because of what Jesus has done, when we call upon Him, we are a new creation.

- 1. The word translated “new” denotes something of superior quality of being. We are regenerated spiritually and our spirit is made alive.
 - 2. We were spiritually dead. But through the sacrifice of Christ, we are made alive!

- c. We are righteous in God’s sight! (v.21)

- i. Now hold on. I didn’t say when you got saved you became a righteous, perfect being.

- ii. The scriptures tell us that even in our sinful flesh, b/c OF THE BLOOD, God sees us as righteous.

- 1. You see, I know my faults, and you know yours.
 - 2. We understand that we are far from perfect on our very best day.
 - 3. But it’s not what we are that makes us righteous, but it is what we have that makes us righteous, it’s what we have been washed in that makes us clean.

- a. I John 1:7 – “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

➤ **Our forefathers have made a difference in our lives through their sacrifice.**

- This country would not be what it is today had it not been for these heroic men.

➤ **Our military has made a difference in each of our lives.**

- If not for the brave men & women who defend this country & give their lives for it, we would be under some dictatorship & would not enjoy the freedoms that we have today.

➤ **But Jesus Christ has made the biggest difference in our lives.**

- Because of Him, we have a freedom today that can be compared to none other.
 - Has Jesus death made a real difference in your life?
 - Jesus wants to make a difference in your life. Will you call upon Him today?