

Unwavering Commitment

- *Luke 23:26-46*

- **On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the world celebrated! WHY? Because World War I was over. President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation to celebrate Armistice Day on November 11.**
- **Later on in 1938, the day was declared a national holiday. In 1954, the name was changed to Veterans' Day in honor of all U.S. soldiers of any war.**
- **Today, we have had the extreme honor of celebrating some of our own Veterans here at our church.**
 - We are proud to not only call these men our members, but even prouder to call them our brothers in Christ.
 - To these and to all of our Veterans, we say a heart-felt, "Thank You" for your sacrifice, for your courageous efforts in the face of danger and for your willingness to fight against all odds for the freedom of these United States of America.
- **Today, I want to share with you the true story of George Everett "Bud" Day.**
 - George Day (24 February 1925 – 27 July 2013) served 3 years in the US Marine Corps and later became a United States Air Force colonel and pilot who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Day spent more than seven years in Vietnamese prison camps, most of it in solitary confinement, and he was a recipient of the Medal of Honor and the Air Force Cross. As of 2013, he is the only person to be awarded both medals, but they did not come without much adversity.
 - George Everett "Bud" Day is "the toughest man I have ever known," John McCain once said. "He had an unwavering and unshakeable sense of honor that made him able to withstand physical and mental pressures of an enormous degree."
 - On 26 August 1967, Major Day was flying on his 65th mission into North Vietnam and acting as check pilot. 37 mm antiaircraft fire crippled the aircraft, forcing the crew to eject. In the ejection, Day's right arm was broken in three places when he struck the side of the cockpit, and he also received eye and back injuries.
 - His partner was rescued by a USAF, but Day was unable to contact the rescue helicopter by survival radio and was quickly captured by North Vietnamese local militia. On his fifth night, when he was still within 20 miles of the DMZ, Day escaped from his initial captors despite his serious injuries. Although stripped of both his boots and flight suit, Day crossed the Demilitarized Zone back into South Vietnam. Within 2 miles of the U.S. Marine firebase and after 12 to 15 days of evading, he was captured again, this time by a Viet Cong patrol that wounded him in the leg and hand with gunfire.
 - Taken back to his original camp, Day was tortured for escaping, breaking his right arm again. He then was moved to several prison camps near Hanoi, where he was periodically beaten, starved, and tortured.
 - Yet, despite all this torture throughout his imprisonment, Day refused to give his captors any information that might harm his fellow soldiers. Upon his eventual release, he returned to military service and served some 41 years in the military, and still believes in its rewards, despite everything he's been through. "You have the greatest job given to you as a young man: to serve your country," Day tells young members of today's military. "It's the single best calling for a young person."
- **Major Day demonstrated the first quality of a committed veteran, and it was the kind of commitment that pictures the commitment our Savior, Jesus Christ, had for us.**
 1. **He Was Committed To A Cause (vv.36-37)**
 - "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself."

- The crowd at the cross taunted Jesus. "Save Yourself! You call Yourself the Son of God, why don't you come down? Where are the angels to deliver you?" But Jesus was committed to a cause! He came to save the world through His death on the cross.
 - If Jesus had chosen to save Himself that day, you & I would be forever lost.
 - He didn't come just to teach & to heal though; He came to die on the cross & carry the sins of all mankind to the cross with Him.
 - This would not be an easy task. With pain & anguish He pressed ahead to Calvary's hill b/c of His great love for you & I.
- Our veterans today understand about commitment. Each of them have demonstrated a heart committed to a cause:
 - The cause of freedom.
 - The cause of courage.
 - The cause of love of country.
- Jesus Christ was committed to a cause! Our veterans were committed to a cause! Let me ask you a question: To what are you committed this morning? For what cause would you risk life? For what purpose would you dedicate your energies, your finances, or your time?
- We honor our veterans today & this week. We thank them for their willingness to serve this great country. But we worship our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. He, alone, is worthy of our praise & adoration.
- We owe our liberty today to each of the veterans throughout this country who have given of their time & energy. But we owe our eternal freedom & our eternal lives to Jesus Christ.
- Today (and every day), we salute the flag of the United States of America! But we kneel before the King of Kings & Lord of Lords.
- There are great men like Major Day all over this country who have similar stories of bravery & heroism. But church, it was our Lord & Savior who willingly gave of His life on Calvary's cross, not just for His own people, but for the world, for all that would believe upon Him.

2. He Was Dedicated To Changing Our Course (vv.42-43)

- "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
- For those 2 men on the cross, their time was running out. Their lives were about to end on earth, but their eternal destinies were about to begin.
- Though both had joined in the crowd's taunts of Jesus, but one of them repented and asked Jesus to remember him.
- And Jesus' reply changed the course of that man's eternal future. In an instant, we have a criminal who was headed to hell, not just for his crime, but b/c he was a sinner; and yet in a moment his course was changed & he traded hell for eternity in Heaven. His soul was taken to Paradise. This is a much different scenario than it could have been...
- If it hadn't been for the dedication of our veterans, imagine the world that we would be living in today.
 - Yes, we still live in a corrupt and twisted society and a messed up world, but imagine the enemies & the wickedness that would have overtaken us if it were not for the commitment of our veterans?
 - In every, single war, these veterans helped change the course of our future.
- But nothing can compare to the change Jesus made through His death, burial, and resurrection. He came to rescue us for time and eternity.

3. Willing To Pay The Price (v.46)

- "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
- Jesus didn't shrink back at the point of death. Instead, He gave it all.
 - Mark 10:45 – "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

- Romans 5:6 – “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”
- Romans 5:10 – “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.”
- These men here today & our veterans all across this world were willing to pay the price for our freedom.
 - They gave up the safety and peacefulness of being at home.
 - They left their friends and families.
 - Some surrendered their personal plans for education and career.
 - Some suffered physically to fight.
 - Many suffered in some way emotionally.
 - Unfortunately, many are disabled today b/c they would not quit.
 - And many paid the ultimate price by giving their lives for this great country & the freedom of Americans that they would never know.
- Teenagers, many of the veterans in this country were just a little older than you when they left everything behind & went to a foreign field to put their life on the line for the freedom to sit in a church service today & lift up the name of Jesus. Don't ever take this time for granted.
 - Part of the reason this country is so great is b/c of the many who were willing to pay the price, however great, for the cause to which they were committed in order to change the course of the future of this nation. They paid the ultimate price.
- What price are you willing to pay this morning to
 - maintain our spiritual freedom?
 - fulfill the purpose Christ has called you?
 - raise your children in the ways of God?
 - achieve holiness in your life & in the lives of your family!
- No greater price has ever been paid than when Jesus gave His life freely for you & me and for all the world!
- Major Day had an extremely successful military career. He no doubt saved many US lives b/c of his unwillingness to break under extreme pressure. But he paid dearly for the choice to remain committed to his country. But to him, it was worth it.
- Veteran' Day is an opportunity for us to thank those who loved enough to give their lives for others.
 - May this flag always be a monument for the many who courageously & willingly gave their all so that we could continue to be free & be the greatest nation on this earth.
 - The cross is a monument too. It's a monument that speaks to all who will hear, and this is what it says.
 - 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.”