

Devotions for the Week of May 27, 2018
LARGE-PRINT
North East United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

Sunday, May 27, 2018

Read Joshua 4:1-7, Exodus 12:1-14, & John 15:13.

The Navy's amphibious assault ship USS New York was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center. Steel from the World Trade Centers was melted down in a foundry in Amite, LA, to cast the ship's bow section.



When it was poured into the molds on September 9, 2003, the steelworkers treated it with total reverence, recalled Navy Capt. Kevin Wensing, who was there. It was a spiritual moment. The ship's motto? "*Never Forget.*"



We celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. Each year we honor all who have fallen fighting for our country, those who made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives for others.

Last week we celebrated Armed Forces Day. This is a day to pray for those men and women currently serving in our military, sacrificing each day for freedom and justice, and for their families as they are separated one from the other.

We cannot forget. We must remember those who gave their lives for the freedom we experience each day and every Sunday when we come to worship without fear of repercussions.

God has always understood that we are a forgetful people and often in the Old Testament stone pillars were erected as memorials of striking events, such as the crossing of the Jordan. Following the crossing of the Jordan, Joshua ordered that stones, one representing each of the tribes of Israel, be built up to be "*a memorial to the people of Israel forever,*" so they would not forget what God had done.

God did the same thing with the Israelites after leading Israel from slavery to freedom. God gave instructions for the Jews to celebrate a feast every year

called Passover. For generations to come, no one would forget what God did, no one would forget how mighty and faithful God was in delivering the Israelites from slavery.

Let us not forget those who have fought, sacrificed, and served our country. Let us pray for those who are currently serving, currently in harm's way. Let us pray for peace. Take a toy army soldier, one of the little green plastic army men you played with as a child, and stick it somewhere in your house where you will see it everyday.



Every time you see this plastic army man, pray for the men and women serving our country. Pray for their families. And whenever you see someone who is serving, thank them for their service. Give God thanks that we can worship without fear and pray that all people around the world may one day experience freedom, justice, and peace. Give God thanks and don't ever forget the greatest sacrifice made for you, God's own Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday, May 28, 2018

Read Exodus 12: 1-14 & Luke 22: 7-20.

Yesterday, we celebrated Memorial Day, which was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order Number 11, and was first

observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. Each year we honor all who have fallen fighting for our country, those who made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives for others.

More importantly, we remember all that God has created, worked, and sacrificed for each of us. Throughout the Old Testament, men and women erected memorials in places where they experienced God. Jacob erected a memorial where he had a vision of a ladder coming down from heaven. The Israelites erected a memorial after crossing the Jordan River with the Ark of the Covenant.

In Exodus 12, God instructs Israel to keep the Passover Feast, for generations to come...to keep the Passover as a remembrance of God's mighty act in leading Israel from slavery to freedom. God understood that we are a "*forgetful*" people and in need of reminders of His mercy, grace, love and might. For Israel, the Passover Meal served as that reminder...helping the people remember how God pulled them from the grasp and shackles of the Egyptians, how God protected them by the "*blood of the lamb*" placed over their doorposts, causing the angel of death to pass them by.

Jesus also understood that we are forgetful people and instituted the act of Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, as a remembrance of His sacrifice, His death, for us. When we take the bread and drink from the cup we remember the One who died for us...who was willing to

give up His life that we might have life. We remember that God has cleansed us with the “*blood of the lamb*” placed over the doorposts of our hearts...and the angel of death now passes us by and we are able to stand before a Holy God and enter eternity.

Memorial Day is about remembering. Remembering those who gave their lives for us, for our country, for our freedom. As we remember our fallen heroes, let us also remember the One who gave us our freedom from sin and death...who opened the door of eternity for each of us...Let us remember our God and His Son, Jesus Christ...and the sacrifice that the Father made...”*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...*” and the sacrifice that Jesus made, “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*”

Take time tonight to be in prayer...to sit with God...and to Remember... Remember the greatest sacrifice and the ultimate love shown for you. May we never forget.

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

Read Luke 7:1-10.

The Roman officer is over his household slave, but puts himself under Jesus. He says, “*I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'God,' and they go or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my*

slaves, 'Do this,' they do it." The Romans officer puts himself in the role of subordinate, even the role of slave, to Jesus, the Master.

Paul opens his letter to the Romans, "*This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus...*" (1:1). Oswald Chambers, in My Utmost for His Highest," writes, "*The passion of Christianity is that I deliberately sign away my own rights and become a bond-slave of Jesus Christ...No one can do this for me, I must do it myself...It means breaking the husk of my individual independence of God, and the emancipation get of my personality into oneness with Himself, not for my own ideas, but for absolute loyalty to Jesus.*"

Do you see yourself as a servant to the One who gave up His life for you? Do you see yourself in the role of a "*bond-servant*," "*a slave*," and Jesus in the position of Master? Is He your Lord, and are you following Him in obedience? Pray and ask God to help you submit your life, all of you, to Him? Surrender to His authority in your life.

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Read Romans 5: 7-11.

"So now we can rejoice..." How do we rejoice in this new relationship? How do we respond to such sacrifice, such love, such grace? We serve. We sacrifice ourselves for others. Jesus said, John 13:35, "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" And Jesus showed us how we are to love one

another by washing the disciples' feet. John 13: 14-15, "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*"

We respond to such sacrifice by offering our lives. We, as Paul writes, "*by the mercies of God...present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is [our] reasonable service.*" We are called to live lives of sacrifice and servanthood.

I pray that our church, North East United Methodist Church, never forgets the "*why*". Why we serve? Why we sacrifice our time and energies? Why we spend long hours in meetings? Why we put up with people's faults and diverse personalities? Why we give our money and talents? Why we forgive and love?

It is because "*He first loved us.*"

Be in prayer tonight...Give thanks for all Christ sacrificed for you and then ask yourself what sacrifice you can make for Christ and for others.

Thursday, May 31, 2018

Read Joshua 23.

Read Joshua's farewell address to the Israelites. Joshua's life and leadership left a powerful legacy and in these last words he reminds the people of God's faithfulness and warns the people of God's response to their unfaithfulness. Joshua tells the people to learn from

those who have gone before them...to remember all God has done and commanded...to not forget.

Because of the influence, teachings, example, and courage of Joshua...because Joshua faithfully served the Lord and made sure Israel did not forget all God had done...Israel followed His example and teaching during his lifetime...and then those who learned under him...were able to continue to lead the people in the ways of God... Joshua's legacy lived on well past his death through those he taught and inspired...

Pray now for courage to boldly leave a legacy of faith for your family. Many people and their direction and impact in life will be influenced by your life. And that influence can be positive or negative.

Consider the legacy you are leaving those around you...consider the legacy your life is already leaving by the things you say and do and the way you represent God in word and deed. Remember all God has done for you and ask God to help you identify those things you are doing well and those areas in which you need to improve—for your sake and for the sake of future generations.

Friday, June 1, 2018

Read Romans 5:6-11.

Why should we serve? Why should we sacrifice our time and energies? Why should we spend long hours in meetings? Why should we put up with people's faults and diverse personalities? Why should we give our money and talents? Why should we work to forgive and to love?

We should do these things because “*He first loved us.*” We must remember the “*Why?*”

Many times over the years you have been asked to sacrifice...to sacrifice your needs and wants for the sake of others...to sacrifice your plans for the hope and possibility of hearing God’s “*still, small voice*” and following His plan...

Jesus said, “*So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*” This is a challenge to each one of us...forsaking our wants for others is not natural to us...it is difficult...Yet, Christ challenges us to serve others, to love others, even our enemies...to sacrifice ourselves, many times without notice or fanfare...

Many times this is not only unnatural but impossible; thus, we must remember the “*Why*” – in remembering “*Why*” we love, “*Why*” we sacrifice, “*Why*” we serve, “*Why*” we get up on Sunday morning instead of sleeping in...we connect into the power...we “*plug in*” to the power that will give us the strength to serve when we are tired, to love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable, to keep fighting for what is right and just and true. We must always remember what the “*lamb of God*” who has “*come to take away the sins of the world...*” has done on our behalf.

What can you sacrifice? Who do you need to forgive? Who can you begin to work with? What committee might you serve on? Can you get up earlier on Sundays and help greet at the door or work in our nursery? Can you leave your group of friends to start a new group to reach

people that need God and His grace? Can you help with the youth group, the children's ministry, sponsor a child in Africa or South America?

What will you sacrifice...what will you give...how will you serve...knowing all Christ sacrificed for you?

Why ask such questions? Because "*He first loved us.*" May we never forget.

Saturday, June 2, 2018

Read Psalm 96.

"*Oh, sing to the Lord a new song...For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised.*" The psalmist tells us that God is "*great and greatly to be praised*" and because of this we should:

(1) "*Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.*" We need to tell others about God, share what God has done in our lives. Pray about who you might tell, who you might invite to hear about God's love.

(2) "*Give to the Lord the glory due His name...*" First, we do this by, "*Bring an offering...*" We are to give of our resources to support God's church, the ministries and missions God is completing through us. Pray about your giving. Pray about giving ahead over the summer if you are going to miss several Sundays so the church doesn't fall behind in fulfilling its ministries and missions because of finances. Secondly, we do this by, "*Come into His courts.*" We need to be present in church, part of the

"body of Christ." We are missed and the church is incomplete when we are not present.

(3) "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad...Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it." We are "in it," this amazing creation of God. Let us be joyful and spread that joy to others, sharing the love and joy of Christ, the majesty and awesomeness of God with others. Smile. Love. Give. Serve. All with joy recognizing God's majesty surrounding you.

**Don't Forget
To Invite Someone To Church Tomorrow!**

Church Mice

Copyright: Karl A. Zurowski

