

FROM THE WORD --

VETERANS DAY -- REMEMBRANCE

A day we pause to remember those who have served our country and protected our families from foreign oppression. We honor those men and women who are serving today in foreign lands for the cause of freedom.

We remember those who gave their lives that we may today enjoy this freedom. World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea, and the present on-going wars in the Middle East -- dying on foreign soil to keep America free. We honor our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Air force, Coast Guard, and others serving valiantly - giving of themselves -- away from their loved ones.

I vividly remember my childhood during WWII and waiting to graduate from High School and enlisting in the US Navy toward the end of the war. My father was a Navy man in WWI and his stories of having five ships blown out from under him drove my desire to volunteer at age 17 and serve also. I never saw action nor was on a ship but the Navy was a highlight of my life.

The Old Testament abounds with stories of wars fought for freedom, and heroes who had a purpose in bringing righteousness and freedom to their people. Leaders like Moses, David, Joshua, Gideon and others -- stories of God doing miracles when the odds were against them.

War is a horrible thing with much blood shed and grief -- innocent lives lost -- but necessary as the cause of right is in the balance.

Have you ever walked the halls of a Veteran Hospital or seen strong, brave men with limbs missing standing firm at attention when the flag passes. To be a veteran of war is something special and deserves the honor and attention of all of us -- not only on this special day, but every day.

Take time to look up a veteran and say "Thanks" for serving -- give him a firm hand-shake or even a hug. Perhaps a family member, a neighbor, or someone you see at an airport or bus station -- share the thrill with them at a home-coming when they are surrounded by family and friends.

The USA has been the world protector, without assuming ownership of the conquered land. Every war we have been engaged in in recent years is to free oppressed people of other nations.

In the New Testament the only references are to the occupying Roman Soldiers and the oppression on the people of Israel, and later on the followers of Christ.

Let us never forget the ONE who willingly gave His Life -- hanging on a Cruel Cross -- to pay the penalty for our sins -- that we might be free. You might call the faithful Apostles and Disciples the "Veterans" of that day -- not fighting with weapons of war -- but standing strong and firm in their beliefs and commitments.

The Apostle Paul put it very clear and plain for us today -- "*Therefore, my Beloved Brethren, be ye Steadfast, Unmovable, Always Abounding in the service of the Lord -- knowing that your battle is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 15:58 -- "Burke" translation).

"Be Strong in the Grace of our Lord . . . as a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

We close with questions from a beautiful old Hymn --

AM I SOLDIER OF THE CROSS, A Follower of the Lamb?

And shall I fear to own His cause, Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies On flowery beds of ease,

While others fought to own the prize, And sailed thru bloody seas?

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*for more information contact Pastor Bruce R. Burke –*

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*Lake Ariel, PA 18436 – Phone 570-698-7890*

*E-mail [openbiblemin@verizon.net](mailto:openbiblemin@verizon.net) -- Web [www.obmworthitall.org](http://www.obmworthitall.org)*