

Isaiah 6:1-8 ¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." ⁸Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

2 Corinthians 1:1-7 ¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the LORD Jesus Christ. ³Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

REMEMBRANCE IS IMPORTANT, NOT ONLY OF EVENTS, BUT ALSO THE REASONS FOR THEM.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN OUR LIFETIMES THAT MAY HAVE NO NEED FOR SYMBOLS, MONUMENTS, OR SPECIAL CEREMONIES TO REMEMBER THEM.

BUT, MORE OFTEN OUR MORTAL MEMORIES CAN BE FLEETING, AS NEW EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, THOUGHTS, AND FEELINGS IN LIFE DRAW OUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE PAST.

CONSEQUENTLY IT IS HELPFUL FOR US TO FIND WAYS TO PROMPT OUR MEMORIES.

TODAY IS THE ORIGINAL DATE OF OUR NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY.

WHAT WAS ONCE CALLED DECORATION DAY WAS BORN OUT OF THE CIVIL WAR, IN BOTH THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH.

IT WAS IN 1863 IN A CEMETERY IN COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI, A WOMAN PLACED FLOWERS ON GRAVES OF BOTH THE CONFEDERATE AND UNION DEAD.

AFTER THE WAR, WOMEN IN THE TOWN CONTINUED TO DECORATE THE GRAVES OF THE FALLEN ONCE A YEAR.

THEN, IN MAY OF 1866, THE VILLAGE OF WATERLOO, NEW YORK HELD ITS FIRST FORMAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE MILITARY DEAD.

OTHER PLACES BEGAN TO COPY AND THEM AND DECORATE THE GRAVES OF THE MILITARY.

EVENTUALLY, MEMORIAL DAY BECAME AN OFFICIAL NATIONAL HOLIDAY

MEMORIAL DAY, IS NO LONGER HELD ON MAY 30TH, AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNATED. INSTEAD IT IS CELEBRATED ON THE LAST MONDAY IN MAY.

BUT WHENEVER IT IS COMMEMORATED, IT IS MEANT TO BE A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF, AND RESPECT FOR, THOSE WHO DIED IN SERVICE TO OUR NATION.

A PORTION OF A POEM, WRITTEN BY THE WOMAN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE POPPY AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF REMEMBRANCE IN THE U.S.A., SPEAKS TO OUR NEED TO REMEMBER.

SHE WRITES ABOUT POPPIES FOUND BLOOMING IN THE FIELDS WHERE SO MANY LOST THEIR LIVES IN WORLD WAR ONE.

AND SHE SAYS: “AND NOW...WE WEAR THE POPPY RED, IN HONOUR OF OUR DEAD.”

THE POPPY, IS ONE WAY WE CAN REMEMBER AND HONOR THE SACRIFICE OF OTHERS ON BEHALF OF OUR COUNTRY.

BUT THE FOLLOWING SAYING CAN BE APPLIED BOTH TO OUR NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP, AS WELL AS OUR MORE PRECIOUS CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

“IF WE FORGET THE VALUE OF OUR HERITAGE, AND THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSINGS, IT WILL BECOME EASY TO TAKE IT ALL FOR GRANTED.”

THIS IS ONE REASON WHY THE STORIES AND TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE ARE SO IMPORTANT.

THEY REMIND US ABOUT GOD’S ACTION IN THE PAST, AND PROMISES FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

HOWEVER, THE PROPHET ISAIAH, OFFERS US AN EXAMPLE OF HAVING NO NEED FOR SOMETHING TO PROMPT ONE’S MEMORY.

IN THE MIDST OF EARTHLY WORSHIP ISAIAH IS GIVEN A VISION OF THE PURIST, FULLEST, AND SINCEREST FORM OF WORSHIP THAT IS POSSIBLE ONLY IN HEAVEN.

HE IS OVERWHELMED BY WHAT HE WITNESSES, AND BY THE REALIZATION OF THE ABSOLUTE HOLINESS OF THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.

IT IS THEN HE SEES HIMSELF AS HE REALLY IS, NOT AS A BASICALLY GOOD MAN WITH SOME FLAWS, BUT AS A SINNER, LIVING AMONG OF A SINFUL PEOPLE.

ISAIAH DESPAIRS THAT BECAUSE OF HIS SINFUL NATURE THIS ENCOUNTER WITH HIS HOLY GOD WILL BE THE DEATH OF HIM.

BUT THEN, THROUGH THE MERCY OF THE HOLY GOD HE IS CLEANSED FROM HIS PAST SIN AND SENT OUT IN TO BE GOD’S PROPHET.

THUS, THE VISION ISAIAH WAS GRANTED BY GOD, OF THE ALMIGHTY ON HIS THRONE IN HEAVEN, AND THE WORSHIP THAT SURROUNDED GOD, BECAME A PART OF HIS BEING.

HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD, THE POWER OF BEING FORGIVEN, AND HIS CALL TO SERVICE AS A PROPHET OF THE LORD, TRANSFORMED HIS LIFE AND PURPOSE.

THEREFORE, ISAIAH COULD NEITHER FORGET THE VISION, NOR IT’S MEANING AS LONG AS HE LIVED.

UNFORTUNATELY, MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT GRANTED THE GIFT OF SO INTENSE AN EXPERIENCE WITH GOD THAT THEY COULD NOT FORGET THE EVENT OR IT’S MEANING.

AND YET, REMEMBRANCE IS IMPORTANT FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

BIBLICALLY, IT WAS NOT GOOD WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE FORGOT WHAT THE LORD HAD DONE FOR THEM. NOR WAS IT GOOD WHEN THEY FORGOT HIS COMMANDMENTS.

THE REASON SUCH REMEMBRANCE IS IMPORTANT IS BECAUSE - LAPSES IN MEMORY CAUSES PEOPLE TO FAIL TO BE THANKFUL GOD, AND TO TRUST IN THE LORD.

THIS IS WHY, IN THE BIBLE, WE FIND MENTION OF VARIOUS MONUMENTS OF STONE OR OTHER THINGS GOD COMMANDED TO BE MADE TO HELP PEOPLE REMEMBER.

THE LORD ALSO DESIGNATED SPECIAL HOLY TIMES EACH YEAR AS ANOTHER WAY TO HELP HIS PEOPLE RECALL THE WORKS AND WILL OF GOD, AND THEIR PROMISE TO WORSHIP THE LORD ALONE, AND TO OBEY HIM.

AND JESUS UNDERSTOOD OUR HUMAN FRAILTIES, WHICH IS THE REASON HE INSTITUTED THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THIS SACRAMENTAL MEAL IS SHARED, IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS DEATH FOR OUR SAKES, AS WELL AS TO PROVIDE SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT.

AND EVEN MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE SACRAMENT REMINDS US OF THE REASON FOR THE BREAKING OF CHRIST'S BODY AND THE SHEDDING OF HIS BLOOD.

THE CROSS, IS ANOTHER SYMBOL THAT MEMORIALIZES THE LOVE OF CHRIST THAT LED TO HIS SACRIFICE FOR OUR SAKES.

THE CROSS POINTS TO THE REASON OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN, AND THE CROSS ALSO CALLS US TO FAITH.

THE WORDS OF AN OLD HYMN EXPRESS THIS TRUTH:
"ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD RUGGED CROSS, THE EMBLEM OF SUFFERING AND SHAME.

AND I LOVE THAT OLD CROSS WHERE THE DEAREST AND BEST FOR A WORLD OF LOST SINNERS WAS SLAIN...

IN THE OLD RUGGED CROSS, STAINED WITH BLOOD SO DIVINE A WONDROUS BEAUTY I SEE; 'T WAS ON THAT OLD CROSS JESUS SUFFERED AND DIED TO PARDON AND SANCTIFY ME...."

THE BIBLE EVEN MORE CLEARLY SERVES TO HELP US REMEMBER THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS AND WHY JESUS DIED.

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTER THREE, VERSES SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN, IT IS EXPLAINED:

"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM, MAY NOT PERISH BUT MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."

"INDEED, GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT IN ORDER THAT THE WORLD MIGHT BE SAVED THROUGH HIM."

YES, GOD THE FATHER, SENT GOD THE SON INTO THE WORLD TO DIE FOR OUR SINS.

AND THROUGH HIS SACRIFICE, THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND ARE ALSO GIFTED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT WHILE THEY STILL ARE IN THE WORLD.

ONE OF THE VERSES OF THE "BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC" REMINDS ABOUT THE POWER OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

THE NEXT LINE SPEAKS ABOUT ONE OF THE REASONS WE HONOR THOSE WHO DIED IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.

AND THE CHORUS DRAWS OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE CONTINUING ACTION OF GOD IN THE WORLD AND AMONG ALL PEOPLES.

"IN THE BEAUTY OF THE LILIES CHRIST WAS BORN ACROSS THE SEA, WITH A GLORY IN HIS BOSOM THAT TRANSFIGURES YOU AND ME:

AS HE DIED TO MAKE MEN HOLY, LET US DIE TO MAKE THEM FREE, WHILE GOD IS MARCHING ON.

GLORY! GLORY! HALLELUJAH! GLORY! GLORY! HALLELUJAH! GLORY! GLORY! HALLELUJAH! HIS TRUTH IS MARCHING ON."

THIS BRINGS US TO THE READING FROM PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS.

IT IS YET ANOTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGE THAT PROMPTS OUR MEMORIES ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE, AND CONTINUES TO DO IN THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY WITHIN CHRISTIANS.

PAUL OPENS HIS LETTER BY REMINDING THE CORINTHIANS IT WAS BY THE LORD'S CALL AND WILL, HE IS AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST.

THIS ESTABLISHES FOR WHO THOSE WHO QUESTION IT, THE REASON PAUL HAS THE AUTHORITY TO TEACH AND CORRECT THE CORINTHIANS IN THEIR WALK WITH CHRIST.

HE THEN PRAYS THE BLESSING OF GOD'S GRACE AND CHRIST'S PEACE UPON THEM ALL.

HIS PRAYER CONTINUES BY OFFERING PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD FOR THE WORK GOD IS DOING AMONG THEM, AND ALL BELIEVERS.

PAUL REMINDS HIS READERS ABOUT ONE OF THE MANY BLESSINGS GOD PROVIDES THROUGH CHRIST AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

HE SPEAKS OF GOD CONSOLING CHRISTIANS IN THEIR SUFFERING FOR THE FAITH AND OTHERWISE, AND PROMISES THIS WILL ENABLE THEM TO COMFORT OTHERS.

JESUS SAID ONE OF THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH HIS FATHER WILL SEND IN HIS NAME, IS TO BE A COMFORTER.

HERE, IN HIS LETTER, PAUL PUTS THIS INTO PRACTICAL TERMS FOR HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS.

HE CALLS FOR THE CHURCH TO BE A COMMUNITY OF CONSOLATION, AFTER FIRST REMINDING ALL SORROWFUL AND HURTING CHRISTIANS TO SEEK CONSOLATION AND STRENGTH FROM GOD.

AND ONCE HAVING RECEIVED THIS HELP FROM GOD, THEY ARE ENCOURAGED TO WALK WITH OTHERS IN THEIR SORROW OR SUFFERING.

THE APOSTLE'S WORDS ABOUT THE CONSOLATION WE ARE OFFERED CAN BE APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

INDEED, WE ARE OFFERED COMFORT AND HOPE IN SORROW AND SUFFERING, IN PART, BY KNOWING JESUS HIMSELF EXPERIENCED THESE THINGS FOR OUR SAKE.

AND AS WE ARE ALSO COMFORTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE ARE CALLED, AS CHRISTIANS, TO SEEK TO CONSOLE OTHERS.

THE APOSTLE'S WORDS REMIND CHRISTIANS THAT WHEN WE HAVE EXPERIENCED GRIEF OR SUFFERING WE ARE BETTER ABLE TO WALK WITH OTHERS IN THEIR EXPERIENCES.

MEMORIAL DAY, MIGHT BE VIEWED IN A SIMILAR WAY. IT CALLS US, AS A NATION, TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE DIED TO PRESERVE THE CONSTITUTION AND THE FREEDOM IT WAS WRITTEN TO PROVIDE.

AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE MISSING A FALLEN LOVED ONE, MEMORIAL DAY CAN BE A DAY OF CONSOLATION, AS WELL AS REMEMBRANCE, WHEN OTHERS HONOR THE SACRIFICE OF THEIR LOVED ONES.

THUS THE DAY IS A TIME FOR US, AS A NATION, TO STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND, WHETHER THE LOSS WAS LONG AGO, OR MORE RECENT.

LET US PRAY:

MOST HOLY GOD, GRACE US WITH THE COMFORT OF YOUR PRESENCE THIS DAY AND EVERY DAY, AND EMPOWER US BY YOUR SPIRIT TO BE A CONSOLATION TO OTHERS.

AS WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE DIED FOR OUR NATIONAL FREEDOM, MAY OUR MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES BE A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION TO THOSE WHO MOURN.

WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR THE LIVES OF THE FALLEN, AND THEIR SACRIFICE; AND PRAY FOR YOUR COMFORT TO BE UPON THOSE THEY HAVE LEFT BEHIND.

WE ALSO PRAY THAT WE AND OTHERS WILL NEVER FAIL TO REMEMBER AND RESPOND TO THE GREATER SACRIFICE OF YOUR SON ON THE CROSS, WHO DIED TO FREE US FROM THE POWER OF SIN AND DEATH.

ALL GLORY AND HONOR AND PRAISE BE TO YOU O GOD, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN

SERMON SUMMARY: ISAIAH 6:1-8 & 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-7

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