

"Thank You"

John 15:9-14

Memorial Day Weekend Message - 2026

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Have you heard of the theory called *six degrees of separation*? Every person on the earth is connected to every other person through a small handful of _____.

- If you've never personally lost someone who gave their life in the line of duty... you know someone who knows someone who carries that grief every single day.

Consider the following real-world examples... of those who are grieving this Memorial Day weekend:

- A widow in her 70's sitting quietly beside a gravestone
- Parents staring at a folded American flag on the shelf
- A combat veteran silently battling survivor's guilt
- An elderly veteran during the national anthem remembering names nobody else in the stadium knows
- A teenager who never met his grandfather except through stories about Vietnam
- A military wife sitting alone for the first time at a church's Memorial Day service
- A child placing flowers on a grave, not understanding why mommy is crying
- A nurse at a VA hospital watching aging veterans slowly fade away
- A young mother trying to explain to her young child why daddy is never coming home

No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main,...Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

- John Donne

Here's what I'm building up to. If you're grieving, _____ is available.

- If you're not grieving, you can be a source of comfort to those who are. (2 Cor 1:3-4)
- If you don't know anyone who's grieving, you can pray. (1 Tim 2:1)

In addition to all of this, you can be _____. Why specifically would we be thankful? Because...

- Reason #1 - Many of the freedoms we enjoy today were preserved through the sacrifice of those who never came home.
- Reason #2 - Memorial Day reminds us of something breathtaking. It's in our main passage. *Let's dive in.*

John 15:9-14 - Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's _____ for one's friends.

- Veterans who sacrificed their lives expressed the greatest form of love: sacrificial love.
 - Their sacrifice preserved earthly freedom.
- Every act of sacrificial love on earth points us to the ultimate act of sacrificial love in history.
 - This ultimate sacrifice can provide eternal freedom.

The _____ sacrifice, of course, is found in **John 3:16**.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not _____ but have eternal life.

Memorial Day reminds us that the highest form of love is costly, sacrifice is real, and gratitude should shape the human heart.

Let's close with ways that we can say, "thank you"... to all veterans who expressed the highest form of love, preserving earthly freedom.

1. We _____ their sacrifice. – Eccl 3:1a
2. We _____ the grieving. – Rom 12:15
3. We _____. – Gal 6:2 (Prayer invites empathy. Empathy helps carry a burden)
4. We live _____ of the sacrifice that veterans made who never made it home. – Gal 5:13

"Okay, but regarding number four... _____, Pastor?" *Well, you do know that NVC is an army and a hospital, right?*

1. DON'T WASTE YOUR FREEDOM LIVING SELFISHLY.
 - a. Don't waste your days away entertaining yourselves to death!
2. USE YOUR FREEDOM TO PUBLICLY WORSHIP GOD.
 - a. Sign up to be a backyard missionary at the a La Carte Street Fair! Wear your Jesus merch everywhere! Pray over your food every time you go out to eat at restaurants! Bring your Bible to work!
3. USE YOUR FREEDOM TO SERVE OTHERS.
 - a. Feed the homeless, serve at the food pantry, and mark your calendar for *Summer Sessions!*