

“Memorial Day”

John 15:1 NRSV – “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

As we celebrate this Memorial Day, it is hard to grasp the ultimate price for our freedom. With all the negative aspects of our country being forced down our throats on a daily basis it is easy to forget all that we have to be thankful for. We can voice our opinions, we can be a part of any religion, we have the freedom to choose any career we desire, we can choose our own spouse.... The list is endless as to the things we have the freedom to select in our lives. Many of these freedoms are not experienced in other parts of the world. And these freedoms came at a heavy cost. The list below are the conflicts with the 10 highest American casualties. Keep in mind that the number of soldiers wounded is about 5 times these numbers:

War	Years	Deaths	Deaths per Day
American Civil War	1861–65	750,000	420
World War II	1941–45	405,399	297
World War I	1917–18	116,516	279
Vietnam War	1961–75	58,209	11
Korean War	1950–53	54,246	45
American Revolutionary War	1775–83	25,000	11
War of 1812	1812–15	15,000	15
Mexican–American War	1846–48	13,283	29
Iraq War/Afghanistan Wars	2001–present	6,717	1.57
Philippine–American War	1899–1902	4,196	3.8

When our country began, 55 men knew that the freedom we need would come at a great cost. Yet they knew that it was the foundation started in love and perfected in God. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” – Declaration of Independence 1776

In the last 240 years approximately 1.5 million men and women have laid down their lives to uphold these beliefs. It has taken a lot of blood to define equality, develop liberty, and display happiness. Not only those that died, but also their families that mourned loss have shown that love is greater than all. They have loved each of us so much and wanted us to have life, have freedom, and have the ability to pursue happiness.

Jesus told his disciples in the Gospel of John, that there is no love greater than to lay down one’s life for his/her friends. He was talking about his imminent death and the fact that it is out of love that he would die for our freedom from sin. Jesus was willing to lay down his life so that we may have life, we may be free, and that we may pursue happiness.

As we swim in our pools, enjoy our barbecues, and play our games, let us not forget those that have loved us. Those that have given everything so that we can have life, liberty, and enjoy happiness. Do not let ourselves get burdened and brought low because of what we do not have. Let us only be grateful for what we have and for those families that sacrificed so much for us.

Prayer: Merciful God, today we are thankful for those that have died for us. For the Men and Women in military that have sacrificed their lives for our great nation we ask that you would comfort their families. For Jesus, our Lord and Savior, we ask for continued guidance that all we are may become more like him. And in his name we pray. Amen