

INTRODUCTION

Memorial Day was established in 1868 at the conclusion of the Civil War as a day to honor the fallen soldiers of the Civil War. This day was expanded to be a solemn recognition of all of our nation's war dead and the high price they paid for the freedoms that we enjoy. In all the wars fought since our inception roughly **1,264,000 American soldiers have died in the nation's wars**— a staggering 620,000 in the Civil War and 644,000 in all other conflicts.

To most people Memorial Day is just another holiday, a day off from work, an opportunity for a long weekend away, or a day of having a good time.

However, we should take time to remember those who gave their lives for us that we might be free. We enjoy freedom here in our country that is unlike anywhere else in the world! But we enjoy that because of the great sacrifice of others:

- A. Many died in "far-away places with strange-sounding names."
- B. Some were snuffed out without knowing what hit them while others suffered great pain and even torture before death came.
- C. Their sacrifice was matched by parents who grieved that a son or daughter would not be coming home. Somebody's child gave their life for our freedom. The dreaded knock came at the door delivering news of a loved one lost.
- D. The widowed mates of those who paid the price for freedom and their children also deserve our gratitude. They, too, paid a high price. We cannot just remember those who died. We must also remember those whose lives were shattered by their death. Somebody's spouse, and somebody's parent died that we might have freedom.
- E. Getting and maintaining our freedom has always come at a high price. It would be heartless for us to fail to honor such sacrifice.

There is the sense in which these that are dead, though silent, still speak—the quality and character of their lives lingering long after they have gone.

We could say that *"they, though they are dead, yet they continue to speak."* They speak of freedom, of sacrifice, and of love of country! Let's not ever forget the great sacrifices that they made on our behalf! That is what Memorial Day is all about! Remember this as you observe the day tomorrow!

"Though they are dead, yet they continue to speak."

This is true regarding those who gave their lives for our physical freedom. But **it is also true regarding those who gave their lives for our faith—that is, our spiritual freedom.**

Do you realize the great sacrifices that so many have made to pass on "the faith" to us? To see that we got the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the fundamentals of our faith passed down to us!

Regarding those who gave their lives for our faith, the writer of Hebrews 11, which is commonly referred to as the *"Hall of Faith"* chapter, declares of Able, who was murdered by his brother but approved by God, that *"he being dead, yet speaketh" (Vs 4)*. That was said of Able directly but it can be said of ALL those mentioned and referred to in this Chapter who *"obtained a good report through faith" (vs 39)*! And it extends to those who came after this chapter was written who also have *"obtained a good report through faith" having earnestly contended for the faith!*

Let us hear what the godly lives of the past say today.

I. THEY SPEAK OF THE GODLY HERITAGE THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO FORGET. (That is, They Speak Of The Matter Of Godly Faith.) (Hebrews 11)

A. FAITH DEFINED! (VS 1)

What does faith mean? **This is the only time the Bible ever defines faith.**

Time and time again, the Bible **discusses faith and the great importance of faith.**

The Bible tells us that **we must have faith—we must believe God**—and it tells us the great things that happen to those who do believe God and live their lives according to that belief!

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

The Bible also gives us example after example of men and women who have believed God, as well as those that have not believed God, and shows us in clear terms what happened to each!

But nowhere does the Bible define faith except here!

So, it is important that we clearly see just what faith means.

The word “*substance*” means *the foundation, assurance, and guarantee of things hoped for.*

The word “*evidence*” means *conviction.*

Let’s break this down:

1. Let’s See What Faith Is Not!

- a. Biblical Faith Is Not Just Belief In One’s Head!** *i.e. It is more than just a mental assent or agreement with!*

James 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

The Bible is very clear— **what we DO shows what we BELIEVE!**

Here in Hebrews 11 it says “*By faith...*” these people were moved to action! **Biblical faith moves the one that has it to action!**

I use to have a bumper sticker on a vehicle I no longer own that said. “*If you are living as if there is no God, you better be right!*”

There are many who **SAY they believe with their LIPS**, but they **SHOW that they DO NOT believe by their lives!**

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

Biblical Faith Is Not Just Belief In One’s Head

- b. Biblical Faith Is Not A Blind Leap!**
That is what so many people today believe Christian faith is.

They think that folks like me have been “*hoodwinked*” or fooled into believing something that may or may not be true.

There was a time in my life when I was skeptical about some things related to Christianity. I was a challenge to my Sunday School Teachers!

I didn’t want someone to say, well you just need to take my word on this and believe it!
I wanted proof! I did not take a blind leap!

- c. Biblical Faith Is Not Trust In The Unknown!**
For we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye. Some are deceived by the worldly philosophy that says “*seeing is believing.*”
(*The eyes can be fooled by “slight of hand” or magic.*)

I cannot see electricity, but I believe in it.
I cannot see the wind, but I can feel it and see the results of it.
I cannot see radio and TV waves but I use them.

We’ve Seen What Faith Is Not...

- 2. Let’s See What Faith Is.**
- a. Biblical Faith is trust in that which is unseen based on clear evidence which I can see or know!**
How do I know that the Bible is the Word of God? By Faith... How so?

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

- 1) **Unity in Diversity.**
66 books, 40+ different writers, over 2000 years, yet no errors and no internal discrepancies.
- 2) **Fulfilled Prophecy.**
Hundreds recorded which have been meticulously fulfilled, often hundreds of years later.

This is a characteristic unique to the Bible of all of the writings that men might call "*scriptures.*"

- 3) **Accuracy.**
The Scriptures recorded things long before science and history discovered these things. *e.g. Blood, The Earth Is Round, Hittites.*
- 4) **Unique Preservation.**
No other book has ever been the object of such antagonism and scorn as has the Bible. Some have tried in vain to totally destroy it and wipe it out!

It still is one of the most longed for books and the world's best selling book.

- b. **Biblical Faith is the persuasion of the mind and heart that someone or something is true and thus leads me to ACT according to that knowledge!**
The primary idea behind faith is trust. That is, a someone or something is true, and therefore worthy of trust.

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

- c. **Biblical Faith is the ultimate assurance and ultimate evidence that certain things not seen are realities!**

That is, faith is being sure and certain about unseen hopes and realities.

I've never been to the Grand Canyon, but I am convinced it is there and plan to go someday.

I've never been to Heaven either, but it is a reality that I am convinced of by faith.

I've never been to Hell, but it is a reality that I am convinced of by faith.

So, we've seen:

- A. *FAITH DEFINED.*
- B. **FAITH DECLARED! (VS 6)**
- C. **FAITH DESCRIBED!--More Than 20 Times The Expression "BY FAITH" Is Used! (VS 4ff)**

Here we find the Examples Of Our Godly Heritage!:

1. **Abel (Vs 4), Enoch (Vs 5), Noah (Vs 7),**
2. **Abraham's Faith Speaks Of Faith And Obedience!**
He abandoned much to follow God! (*Hebrews 11:8-9*)
 - a. **He Yielded To God's Direction. (Genesis 12:1-8)**
He followed God to his possession though he had never seen it.
 - b. **He Trusted God To Do The Impossible. (Romans 4:18-22; Genesis 21:1-7)**
Isaac was born despite the seeming impossibility of it happening.

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

- c. **He Obeyed God Even When It Didn't Make Sense. (Vs 17; Genesis 22:1-18)**
Isaac was offered despite the seeming contradiction.

3. **Many Others After These On Up Through Today! (Charles Finney, E.M. Bounds, Andrew Murray, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, R.A. Torrey, Dr. Lee Roberson, Dr. John R. Rice, the list goes on...)**

4. **There Are Also Personal Examples Of Godly Heritage That Have Touched Our Lives.**

THESE ALL SPEAK OF THE GODLY HERITAGE WE OUGHT NOT TO FORGET. (That is, they speak of the matter of Godly faith!)

II. THESE ALL SPEAK OF THE GODLY OPPORTUNITIES THAT WE DARE NOT WASTE. (HEBREWS 12:1)

The opportunities for freedom today were paved by the blood of those who believed in freedom! Many have no appreciation of that freedom and the price that so many have paid for it!

Likewise, the opportunities for faith today were paved by the blood of those who believed God in the past. Many have no appreciation of that faith and the price that so many have paid for it!

- A. **They Speak Of The Opportunity To Have Godly Priorities In Our Lives!** *“Let us lay aside every weight...”*
Luke 9:23-- “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

- B. **They Speak Of The Opportunity To Have Godly Purity In Our Lives!** *“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us...”*

- C. **They Speak Of The Opportunity To Have Godly Patience And Perseverance In Our Lives!**

**THEY STILL SPEAK
HEBREWS 11:4; 12:1**

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”
The word **“patience”** means *“endurance.”*

The personal battles we face between good and evil is won only as God's people pay the price of personal discipline and public integrity, touching this world for good!

III. THESE ALL SPEAK OF THE GODLY MESSAGE WE MUST NOT FORSAKE! (HEBREWS 12:2, 3)

- A. **The Good News Of Jesus Christ We Must Claim For Ourselves!**

1. **On the cross Jesus became the AUTHOR of our faith!** (It is ALL about JESUS and His salvation purchased through the Gospel!—Someone put it this way, *“He wrought it, He sought it, He bought it!”*)

2. **On the throne Jesus becomes the PERFECTER, the FINISHER of our faith!** (It is STILL ALL about JESUS!)
Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- B. **The Good News Of Jesus Christ We Must Proclaim To Others!** *“It's only Good News if they receive it in time!”*

CONCLUSION

Only the Good News of Jesus Christ, lived and shared, has the power to rescue individual lives and heal our nation.

We are debtors to those who have gone before us for their faithfulness to God and righteousness.

Now it is our turn to offer the same to those who come after us. We must stand up and be willing to fight if need be for our freedom and for our faith!