

LEST WE FORGET

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, May 28, 2006



[Isaiah 2:1-5](#)

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

[Hebrews 13:6-8](#)

So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

[Ecclesiastes 12:1-3](#) **Re-**

member your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain; in the day when the guards of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the women who grind cease working because they are few, and those who look through the windows see dimly;

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Memory can be a tricky thing. Particularly as we get older. There is the story about a **man and his wife** who both were having difficulties with their memory. They **heard** about a doctor who was reputed to have great success in helping people with memory problems, so they decided to go. A few weeks later, they were chatting with a friend about this, and told him it was working. The friend said he was having problems with his memory also, and asked for the name of the doctor. The husband said, "**You'll have to help me here a little with my memory technique.** Uh, let's see, a flower, long stem, uh, thorns..." "**Rose,**" his friend guessed. "**That's it,**" the husband said, "**Hey Rose, what's the name of that doctor?**"

Patient to his psychiatrist: Doctor, I cannot remember anything! I forgot what happened yesterday. I forgot what my car looks like. I cannot even remember my own name. Psychiatrist: How long have you had this problem? Patient: What problem?

So, if you have difficulty in remembering things you are not alone! **Memory is a tricky thing.** Today we are reminded that there are certain things that should never be forgotten.

Do you know how the first Memorial Day came about? It was a spring morning

in 1866, just after the Civil War that had devastated the South. A group of Southern women did something quite extraordinary. They marched down the streets of what was left of their town to a cemetery. **There they decorated the graves of the soldiers.** All the soldiers - Union as well as Confederate. The mothers, daughters, and widows had buried their dead. **Now they buried their hatred. It was an act of forgiveness – putting the animosity of the war behind them.** The time for healing had come.

If we forget the past - we are doomed **to repeat its mistakes** in the future! Of course, there are also things that should be forgotten. **A well-trained memory is one that permits you to forget everything that is not worth remembering.**

Memorial Day is the time that we remember the debt we owe to others. We honor the ultimate price **paid by the men and women who lost their lives in defense of liberty.** To honor their sacrifice is not to glorify war. **War is the ultimate blasphemy against God.** Still, we live in a cruel world where tyrants would impose their will on others. It would be wonderful if we lived in a world where people always played by the rules and where no one coveted his neighbor's property, where never again **would we have to depend upon** military might to enforce justice. However, such a world does not yet exist. We do not know what dangers may yet await us. We honor the memory this day of those who have lost their lives in the cause of justice, **believing** that they were making the world safer, freer and more humane.

**There are also others have given their lives without ever wearing a uniform or carrying a gun.** In the sixteenth century, there was heartless persecution of Christians in Scotland. **Thousands of Christians suffered for Christ's sake.** Many were hanged or slaughtered in cold blood. Some of these believers were burned at the stake or beheaded. Patrick Hamilton was a young Scotsman, twenty-four years old, when he was sentenced to die. As the fire burned, the young martyr called out, **"How long, o Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this realm? How long wilt Thou suffer this tyranny of man?"** As he was being consumed by the flames he prayed like the biblical Stephen, **"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."**

We remember Christian martyrs like Patrick Hamilton! They died in a battle that is still raging -- **the battle between light and darkness.**

Their sacrifices raise the question of how our own witness for Christ is. Martin Luther King wrote from Birmingham jail in 1963. Injustice **anywhere** is a threat to justice **everywhere.**

The well known **German Theologian Martin Niemoller** initially supported the National Socialism of the Nazis in Germany. He kept quiet while others spoke out. There came a day that he could be quiet no more and he started speaking out. Soon he was arrested and languished in Nazi prison camps, barely escaping with his life before the welcome end of World War II. It was then that he wrote:

First they came for the **communists**, and I did not speak out - because I was not a **communist**; Then they came for the **socialists**, and I did not speak out - because I was not a **socialist**; Then they came for the **trade unionists**, and I did not speak out - because I was not a **trade unionist**; Then they came for the **Jews**, and I did not speak out - because I was not a **Jew**; Then they came for me - **and there was no one left to speak out for me.**

And that is the advice that King Solomon gave to the upcoming generations of his time and all times. That was our final scripture reading for today: **Remember** your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, **"I have no pleasure in them";**

Of all things to remember, remember your Creator most – remember God and learn God's ways while you are still young and sensitive and open. Learn about God and God's endless love;

Remember your God

1. Before the difficult days come
2. Before the years come in which you find little pleasure
3. While the sun, moon, and stars are not darkened
4. While the clouds do not return after the rain

Today we remember.

We remember those who died that we may live in freedom.

We remember those who died that we may live in faith.

We remember Christ who died that we may discover the secret of living.

**That's the ultimate meaning of this Memorial Sunday.  
It is a time to remember and it is a time to finish what they started.**

**AMEN**