

There is a word which I want to use today to honor those we have gathered to remember. It is not often used in this setting, but it is often a part of the Memorial Day remembrance. It is a word which epitomizes the promise of the sacrifice that has been made.

Memorial Day was established to remember those who have given their lives in service to the “Greater Promise” of our country by conquering the kingdoms of darkness by administering God’s justice so that God’s promise can be enjoyed. The promise of living safely in our land is exercised through the word I want you to remember.

It is a word which describes when we gather freely, we eat indulgently, we play joyously, we celebrate securely because others who have come before us, and those who volunteer to surround us did and do create a hedge of protection in which we can safely fellowship. We do so as families, neighbors, communities in relative sanctuary because those who conquered evil kingdoms, and administered God’s justice gained this promise for us all.

We are the envy of the world because of this activity, not because others around the world can’t do it, they just don’t enjoy the same freedom, blessings, joy, and security afforded to us. This gift of safe passage has come at a cost that the brave were willing to pay, some paying that price in the midst of conflict, others who fought and came home to remain faithful to the cause. We must honor this precious sacrifice and have that chance even today when we gather with family and friends to break bread in remembrance of their sacrificial gift to us.

In a very unique way, we honor the sacrifice of the fallen when we participate together in this word I would like you to remember. They longed to provide a home for us that would shelter us from harm, that would shower us in God’s protection, that would save us from the fear of the cruelty of this world. When we take full advantage of their vision, we redeem their sacrifice in ways that are reflected in the laughter of our children, in the embraces of our loved ones, and partaking of luscious delights. It is this very thing for which they fought because it is the practical application of their hope.

So, the word I would have you think about today with me. The word which in all due respect of those who gave everything is our sweet expression of their sacrifice. That word is the word “Picnic”. Consider how Picnics represent the gained promise of God. Picnics, a central feature of the Memorial Day Holiday, epitomize the promise of God because they represent everything good about the sanctity and safety of our nation...we gather freely, we eat indulgently, we play joyously, we celebrate securely...is there anything better in Americana which illustrates just how great we have it in this promised nation of ours...our nation is a product of promise because we have had heroes willing to conquer evil and administer God’s justice here and around the world.

Some might say that we are being trite suggesting that the sacrifice of fallen soldiers should be honored by gathering together with family and friends to picnic...but it was the very promise of God for which they fought against evil as agents of God’s justice so the world in which we live would be safe...the principle of “no greater love” always results in making this world a better place, but also points us to the complete fulfillment of this promise of safety in Heaven where we have entrusted our dear departed.

When you gather today with your family for that cookout or potluck, or maybe you have been spending extra time with your family and friends all week-end. Please appreciate that we are able to do so because some have paid the ultimate price in the battle against evil. We reward their sacrifice when we continue to conquer evil at home and administer God’s justice because we know we gain the promise of safety only our Creator can give. Those we honor today believed this truth. I hope you not only believe it, but as you picnic with those you love, you will have gratitude in your hearts to God and to those He called to serve so we could picnic free from the threat of tyranny, fostered in the triumph of security. Thank you, and may God richly bless you.