

No Greater Love

Today we enjoy freedom because men and women went to war and defended our rights to sit right here in these chairs. We sit here in North America, in Canada, in Salmo in complete freedom. We can praise God without being shot or put into prison. We have amazing freedom compared with much of the rest of the world.

Recently Christian women were abducted and sold to Muslim men for the sole purpose of raping them and violating them. Their corpses adorned trees as their naked bodies were hung for all to see their humiliation.

Worldwide more than 100 million Christians are being persecuted because of their faith. An analyst for the German aid organization Open Doors which supports persecuted Christians worldwide, has observed that the five countries which are most against the Christian belief today are North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

The persecution that the Christians face today has many different facets – from direct physical violence to discrimination in daily life by authorities or in shops.

Unfortunately we see Islamic extremism increasing further. There are a couple of groups that have unfortunately even made it into Western media. I just want to mention Boko Haram in Nigeria, where there have been attacks again and again, especially against Christians. Another example from this year would be Mali, where in the last year Islamist groups have conquered the entire North. Recently there was an attack on a church in Pakistan, the harshest assault that has ever occurred against a Christian church in this country. Hence the violence is increasing and it is not focused on a certain region.

We have freedom today because of the Men and Women that we honor today. I find the concept of the white poppy replacement abhorrent. It diminishes the sacrifice of the men and women who fought and those and who died for our freedom.

We must not forget the cost of war; and in many cases the cost of the blood of our own fathers and/or grandfathers.

Let us not let our freedom sit idle.

Let us make use of that which was purchased for us in actual blood.

Let us be good stewards of our freedom, that God and his servants have granted us. Because let us be honest... There are no atheists in foxholes.

What will we do to honor that sacrifice...

John 15:13

King James Version (KJV)

¹³ *Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Remember the greatest veteran of all? The one who fought the battle for your freedom and won? Jesus went to the cross and shed his blood for you.

Hebrews 2:14

¹⁴ *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—*

Revelation 1:18

¹⁸ *I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*

1 Peter 4:5-6

⁵ *But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.* ⁶ *For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.*

---Now the elephant in the room---

How could a loving God allow things like war to happen?

How could a loving God allow for those women to be murdered?

God does not interfere with our choices... to do so would invalidate our right to choose him instead of being compelled.

Do not be deceived... God has NOT forgotten, he has said:

Romans 12:19

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but ^[a]leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

Atrocities and horror are the created by the choices of evil men. God has only delayed his judgement – it is immanent.

2 Peter 3:9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

God is faithful and just...

Just as the men and women who have fought, shed tears, blood, limbs and even died for the cause of freedom, so has Jesus given us his blood to save us and give us freedom. But not just from abuse, persecution and tyranny, but from our sinful nature, he gives us the addition of eternal life and the hope that we can see again all those who have gone before us and who we honor today.

You see, Christ loved his disciples. He took them into a covenant of friendship with him, just as he has for us. He said in John 15:14, 15 “if you approve yourselves by your obedience, my disciples, indeed you are my friends and shall be treated as friends” The followers of Christ are friends of Christ. Those that do the duty of servants are admitted and advanced to the dignity to be called his friends. The men and women who fought for our freedom, may never have known us and yet that did not stop them. Christ never distances himself from the suffering of his people that is why he wept when Lazarus had passed. He knew he could raise him from the dead, he was just sensitive to the suffering of his friends.

Jesus is with you this morning. He is comforting your heart, he is with those who accepted him and did the greatest thing that a man or woman can do. He loves those who have suffered and died for your freedom.

Can you see that there is nothing more Christ-like than the sacrifice of self for the benefit of another?

I just want to stop here and let Christ minister to you this morning.

Prayer...

Let us honor the freedom here in Canada of that was purchased for us at the high cost of the blood of those who fought for us and have gone on to be with Jesus.

And most importantly let us honor the blood of Christ, the victorious redeemer of our very souls. The One, who fought the battle for us and with his blood, bought us freedom here on earth, has changed our nature and has granted us the hope of eternal life.

Today we have remembered those that have gone before us. Now I feel that we need to take a few moments and Pray to the one who cares for them, the one who gives each of us hope.

Turn to the person next to you and pray for each other. Don't stop there if you feel the Holy Spirit leading you go and pray for whomever you feel you are being told to pray for. Let's exercise that freedom that was bought for us right now...