

5-26-19 **MEMORIAL DAY --- EVERYONE IS SOMEONE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST – Especially Those Whose Memory Is So Very Special To Us**
Revelation 7: 19-17

A bit of Background: The root word of “MEMORIAL” is the French word, *memoria* which imputes meanings such as **BEING MINDFUL** and of **REMEMBERING**.... hence, **mindful, reflective, appreciative memories.**

DECORATION DAY was started by individual states to MINDFULLY REMEMBER & APPRECIATE those Americans that lost their lives in the Civil war. Flags were flown to **decorate their communities and to remind one another of the lives that fought for a UNITED STATES** --- united under one flag and one government ... one nation under God.

By the late 1860’S, every state had designated a “Decoration Day” to remember those who died in the Civil War and May 30 was designated the ‘official’ date in 1868. Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act and Memorial Day was then designated to be the LAST MONDAY OF MAY.

After World War I, DECORATION DAY was expanded to include the remembering and honoring the lives of ALL OF THOSE who had died in military service to our country.

The designation “DECORATION DAY” was changed to “MEMORIAL DAY” in 1971.

Over the years, we’ve grown to not only remember those who have died in military service BUT TO ALSO REMEMBER our loved ones and those who have gone before us ... those family members and friends that have passed from this world to the next.

Many families choose to remember family members who have passed with decorating gravesites, parades, picnics, and special gatherings ... **all for the purpose of MINDFULLY & RESPECTIVELY REMEMBERING those who have died and those who have made a SIGNIFICANT IMPACT upon our lives.**

The basic message & theme for today is:
REMEMBERING THE PAST
INSPIRES THE PRESENT
AND IMPACTS THE FUTURE

The idea of “REMEMBERING” is not new nor is it unique to American life & culture. The Bible records for us all sorts of traditions, memorials, services, gatherings & festivals FOR THE SAKE OF REMINDING GOD’S PEOPLE OF THE LOVE OF GOD; THE CARE & WORK OF GOD; and THE LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS USED BY GOD TO CHANGE THE PRESENT & IMPACT THE FUTURE.

Coming quickly to mind, I recall:

Noah, Abram, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (multiple times), Joseph, Moses, David, Nehemiah and many other times where God gave the instruction to mark a moment in time with a ROCK, a PILE OF ROCKS, or a KNOT ON A PRAYER SHAWL, etc. In many of these instances, God directs his followers to do this for the purpose of marking a moment ... BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY ... that it may be a TEACHABLE MOMENT TO THE CHILDREN and THE GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOWED.

Consider Joshua 4:6-7: *So, Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe,⁵ and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites,⁶ to serve as a sign among you. IN THE FUTURE WHEN YOUR CHILDREN ASK YOU, 'What do these stones mean?'⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. **These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.**"*

**** Memorials are not meant just to remind and inspire the PRESENT BUT ARE ESSENTIALLY MEANT TO REMIND THE “CHILDREN” THAT THE FUTURE MAY CONTINUE TO BE FORMED BY THE MEMORY OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia in 1971 was struggling to unite a previously segregated high school to become a single integrated school. Likewise, Herman Boone, the football coach, was trying to unite a racially divided football team. There is a scene in the movie where Coach Boone rouses his players in the early morning and leads the team on a run to the nearby battlefields of Gettysburg. At the battlefield, Coach Boone REMINDS the team of the significance of Gettysburg in their collective PAST SO THAT the team might be INSPIRED to join together to do more in their PRESENT they changed the FUTURE of their lives and of their community. SO ... as we consider all of these story lines ... we see the pattern that reflects basic human nature

**REMEMBERING THE PAST
INSPIRES US IN THE PRESENT
AND IMPACTS THE FUTURE**

BIBLICALLY & SPIRITUALLY we remember the acts and mercies of God so that we may honor God & be inspired **to pass on the memories to our children and propel each of us forward** as Children of God ... living and working for the Kingdom of God.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

Revelation 7:9-17 New International Version (NIV):

⁹After this I looked, and there before me was a **great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.** They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice: *“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”*

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying: *“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”*

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, **“These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”** ¹⁴I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, **“These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”** ¹⁵Therefore, **“they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple;** and he who sits on the throne **will shelter them with his presence.**

¹⁶**‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat.’** ¹⁷**For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.’** **‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”**

FRIENDS --- THIS IS QUITE THE FUTURE!!!!

- + THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US IN THE FAITH
 - + THOSE WHO HAVE SURVIVED THE TRIBULATIONS OF LIFE
 - + THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WASHED CLEAN IN THE LIFE OF JESUS
- ARE NOW IN THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD --- IN THE PRESENCE OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT ---- AND LIFE IS GOOD !!!!!**
- + AS YOUR FAMILY REMEMBERS AND SHARES ABOUT THE LIVES OF THOSE SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE --- THOSE SPECIAL PEOPLE in the LIFE OF YOUR FAMILY ---- **SHARE WITH 1x1 HOW EACH OF YOU ARE LIKE THEM --- WHAT PARTS OF YOUR BELOVED ARE PARTS OF EACH OF YOU?**

CELEBRATE AND LAUGH ... REFLECT MINDFULLY UPON THE WAYS THAT YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN MADE BETTER ... HOW YOU’VE BEEN FORMED ... BY THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE YOU.

- + Are there people or events in your PAST that you should REVISIT, REMEMBER and RECALL & share with those closest to you? Are there things that have impacted you? **HOW HAS GOD USED THAT PERSON OR EVENT TO BLESS YOU OR TO MAKE YOU WHO YOU ARE TODAY?**
- + **HOW HAVE PARTS OF YOUR PAST INSPIRED YOU?** HAVE YOU EVER TOLD YOUR CHILDREN OR THOSE CLOSEST TO YOU “HOW” & “WHY” THESE PEOPLE OR EVENT AFFECTED YOU?
- + AS YOU RECALL & REMEMBER ... **ARE THERE ANY PROMISES or INSPIRATIONS THAT YOU NEED TO RENEW & RECOMMIT?**
- + WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES and DREAM FORWARD --- **HOW MIGHT THE WORLD BE A BETTER PLACE IF YOU AND THOSE NEAR YOU WERE TO LIVE INTO THE INSPIRATION OF YOUR PAST? YOUR PRESENT?**
- + HOW MIGHT YOUR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, and THOSE CLOSEST TO YOU BE BETTER as **YOU CLAIM THE PROMISE THAT “GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM...”** (Romans 8:28) and as **YOUR PRAYERS, DREAMS, COMMITMENTS, BEGIN TO TAKE SHAPE AND AFFECT YOU AND THOSE AROUND YOU FOR THE GOOD?**

SO --- REMEMBER --- That WHEN WE REMEMBER THE PAST WE INSPIRE THE PRESENT ... and WE IMPACT THE FUTURE

Epecially, if the FUTURE is as promised in Revelations 7:9-17!

Dear God, **PLEASE HELP US** to make the time to REMEMBER & REFLECT mindfully of those who have gone before us ... and of ways that YOU HAVE CARED FOR US ... **PLEASE BRING TO MIND PEOPLE & THINGS THAT YOU WANT US TO REMEMBER ... PLEASE OPEN OUR MINDS & HEARTS** to be RESPONSIVE TO YOU and THE HOLY SPIRIT’S INSPIRATION ... **THAT WE MAY EMBRACE THE PAST & SEIZE THE PRESENT THAT YOU’VE SET BEFORE US ...** SO THAT WE MAY WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A BETTER TOMORROW AND ONE DAY STAND AMONGST THE SAINTS IN HEAVENLY GLORY. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN