

Sermon November 7th
First Presbyterian Church
Hackettstown, NJ
Rev. Dn. Jeanette Hile

Let us pray,
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of
my heart be acceptable to you O Lord, my strength
and my Redeemer. Amen

Sacrifice

Sacrifice: According to Webster's dictionary
sacrifice has several meanings. They are:

To offer as a sacrifice

To suffer loss

To give up something willingly

The act of offering something to a deity that is
precious

On November 11, as we do every year, we will
honor all those men and women who have served in
our nation's military.

Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day which we celebrate in May. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all US military veterans whereas Memorial Day honors those who have sacrificed their lives while serving our country. Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day which marked the end of World War I on November 11, 1918. (Ironically, that was the year my late father was born.)

In 1954, at the urging of major military groups Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day. In today's bulletin you will see a list of all veterans who are associated with this church.

Yesterday, at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, our nation honored a true American hero. A man who faithfully served and sacrificed much for our country, Colin Powell.

A veteran of Vietnam Colin Powell served as a four-star general and son of immigrants, security adviser to President Ronald Reagan, statesman and Secretary of State. He was "A down to earth statesman, leader and a man of great faith." One of

his quotes was, “We all need to treat everyone with a little bit more kindness when we think they deserve it because we don’t know what’s going on in their lives.”

In his eulogy of his father Michael Powell recalled his father’s poignant words of wisdom, “We can choose to be good.” Words to truly embrace and live by. Words of a great man who sacrificed much.

Now, if I may, I would like to call your attention to one name on our veterans list that you may not be familiar with, Alan Harty.

Alan just happens to be my nephew who served twelve years as a black hawk helicopter pilot in the US Army.

He was deployed three times to Afghanistan and Iraq.

While there, he flew lifesaving medical missions and was a witness to the horrors of combat. Today, he continues to serve his country as a pilot and active member of the Alaskan National Guard. He flies life saving missions only this time it’s patients of covid and other medical emergencies in and outside of

Alaska. I am so very proud of him and his willingness to sacrifice precious time away from his wife and two little boys in order to help others.

The uniform on display today belonged to my late dad, James L. Hile. Dad served in the US Army in WWII as a Technical Sergeant. He continued to served his country for twenty-two years as a Lt. Colonel in the US Air Force Auxiliary where he flew over 50 missions.

Many have sacrificed so much and have given so freely of themselves so we may enjoy our cherished freedoms today. We honor them all and thank God for their sacrifices.

In our gospel reading today Jesus teaches us the meaning of sacrifice.

First, he warns us of those who are pretentious, greedy and self-centered who regard themselves as pious. Who, because they are wealthy, seek to curry favor in the eyes of all, expecting praise and adoration.

Jesus then teaches us about true sacrifice. He tells the story of the poor widow who gives the little money she has to help others.

Jesus says, “Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put in more than all who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

It reminds me of that famous Biblical quote, “The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.”

Indeed, so it is with those who sacrifice something yet expect nothing in return.

So then here comes my question to you, for surely you know by now I nearly always have a question or two for you to ponder. What then are you willing to sacrifice or give freely in your life?

We all know the greatest sacrifice our Lord gave to us was his life so we may be pardoned of our sins. All he asked in return was to believe in him and God the Father.

Most of us sacrifice much for our children, family and friends, but what are we willing to sacrifice for those whom we may not know? People like the poor, the sick, the lonely and those who mourn.

How much are we willing to sacrifice for our community, our church and for the preservation of this precious planet we call earth?

There is much we can and indeed should do. It's up to us to determine how, when and why we offer up ourselves. For truly it is through giving and sacrifice we receive.

So then, let us make a pledge today, right here and right now to offer up ourselves to some greater good. With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, let us give thanks and in doing so offer some sacrifice, albeit great or small for the benefit of those less fortunate than we. Then and only then can we honestly and proudly call ourselves children of God.

Amen