

## WHAT WE OWE A VETERAN<sup>1</sup>

### LUKE 23:26-46

26 And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. 27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. 28 But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

32 Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. 35 And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine 37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" 38 There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

44 It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

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<sup>1</sup> Rigg, David, *What We Owe A Veteran*, SermonCentral.com

*46Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

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On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the world celebrated!

WHY?

Because World War I was over.

President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation to celebrate Armistice Day on November 11.

In 1938, the day was declared a national holiday.

In 1954, the name was changed to Veterans' Day in honor of all U.S. soldiers of any war.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize those veterans that are with us today. Are there any here?  
Era (WW2, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq)

Please stand and be recognized. "Thank you for your service."

The program does not give us time, but wouldn't it be great to hear some of the stories that these service men and women could tell us?

There is another group that I would like to recognize as well. If you have a family member who served or is serving in the military and they are not able to be here today, would you please stand in their place today?

To them and to all veterans we say, "Thank you!"

Transition:

On this Veterans Day Celebration, I would like to share the story of the "Palmyra Massacre"?

On September 12, 1862, Confederate Army Col. Joseph E. Porter decided to raid Palmyra, Missouri and release the 45 Confederate prisoners who had been captured and placed in the county jail. He picked a time when most of the Union forces were off on a wild-goose chase at Monticello. Colonel Porter and about 400 men slipped into the town. They captured several prisoners and among them was 60 year old Andrew Allsman, a Union sympathizer who had the reputation of betraying his Confederate neighbors to the militia. He was much disliked by the Confederates. Col. Porter, after occupying the town for about two hours, felt that he had accomplished his purpose. The prisoners in the jail were freed, arms and supplies

were confiscated and some horses taken before the Rebel soldiers withdrew from the town.

Veterans Are Committed to a Cause:

*37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"*

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"Save yourself" they shouted and taunted Jesus.

But Jesus was committed to the cross! His task was to "to be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49) His task was to save the world through the cross.

Our veterans have demonstrated a heart committed to a cause:

- The cause of freedom.
- The cause of courage.
- The cause of love of country.
- The cause of Constitutional self-government.

Jesus Christ was committed to a cause!

Our veterans were committed to a cause!

Let me ask you a question: To what are you committed? For what cause would you risk life?

For what purpose would you dedicate your energies...your finances, your time?

We honor our veterans and rightly so.

But we worship our Commander in Chief; Jesus Christ, the King of Kings!

We owe our liberty to our veterans.

But we owe our eternal lives to Jesus Christ.

We salute the flag!

But we kneel before the Christ of the cross.

Transition:

On October 8, Provost Marshal William R. Strachan, published a notice to Confederate Colonel Porter that unless Allsman was returned within 10 days, 10 former Confederate soldiers held as prisoners in Palmyra and Hannibal would be

executed. The ten days elapsed, and no reply was ever received. It was believed that Andrew Allsman was dead. On that day, 10 Confederate prisoners, already in custody, were selected to pay with their lives. The names of the men were as follows: Willis Baker, Thomas Humston, Morgan Bixler, Herbert Hudson, John M. Wade, Marion Lair, Capt. Thomas A. Sidner, Eleazer Lake, and William T. Humphrey. These soldiers were informed on Friday evening that unless Mr. Allsman was returned to his family by 1 o'clock on the following day, they would all be shot at that hour. The Rev. James S. Green, of this city, remained with them during that night, as their spiritual adviser, endeavoring to prepare them for their sudden entrance into the presence of their Maker. A little after 11 a.m. the next day, three Government wagons drove to the jail. They carried a total of 10 rough board coffins.

### Veterans Are Dedicated to Changing the Course of the Future

*42And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

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For those men on the cross, time was running out. Their lives were about to end on earth, but their eternal destinies were about to begin.

Though both had joined in the crowd's taunts of Jesus, something happened on that afternoon for one of them for he repented and asked Jesus to remember him. And Jesus' reply changed the course of that man's eternal future.

In an instant, he was delivered from certain damnation and hell.

His soul was taken to Paradise.

I shudder to think of where America would be if it hadn't been for the dedication of our veterans. Yes, we still live in a corrupt and twisted society, but who knows what powers might have dominated, if it were not for the commitment of our veterans?

Truly, in each war, they changed the course of the future.

Application:

What are you willing to do for the future...?

For this church...?

For your own family?

However differently our nation's history may have been without the contribution of our veterans, yet nothing can compare with the change Jesus made through the cross.

He came to rescue us for time and eternity.

Transition:

Ten men were escorted from the prison and seated in the wagons, one sitting upon each coffin. A guard of soldiers accompanied them, and the cavalcade started for the fairgrounds located half a mile east of the town.

The ten coffins were removed from the wagons and placed in a row 6 or 8 feet apart. Thirty soldiers of the Union Army Second Missouri State Militia were drawn up in a single line facing the row of coffins. The arrangements completed, the doomed men knelt upon the grass between their coffins and the soldiers, while the Rev. R. M. Rhodes offered up a prayer. At the conclusion of this, each prisoner took his seat upon the foot of his coffin, facing the muskets which in a few moments were to launch them into eternity. A hundred spectators had gathered to witness the scene. The stillness of death pervaded the place. The officer in command now stepped forward, and gave the word of command, "Ready, aim, fire."

VETERANS ARE WILLING TO PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE:

*46Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

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Jesus didn't shrink back at the point of death.

Jesus gave it all.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:6

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Romans 5:10

Our veterans were willing to pay the price:

They gave up the safety and peacefulness of being at home.

The left their friends and families.

Some surrendered their personal plans for education and career.

Many were radically physically disabled.

Many actually paid the price of their very lives.

Countless young men and women, in the bloom of youth, have been willing to pay the price, however great, for the cause to which they were committed in order to change the course of the future of this nation.

Application:

What price are you willing to pay?

- To maintain our spiritual freedom?
- To fulfill the purpose Christ has called you?
- To rid yourself of all that robs you of God's high expectation of you?
- To do what you can to raise your children to have personal faith in Jesus Christ?

No greater price has ever been paid!

[Jesus paid in His blood for those who couldn't have cared less.](#)

## CLOSING

One of the ten men originally on the list of prisoners to be executed received a last minute reprieve. The reprieved man was William T. Humphrey. Hearing that Humphrey was under the sentence of death, a young man named Hiram Smith came forward, explaining that he was unmarried and without a family. He asked permission to take the place of Humphrey, stating that perhaps it would be better for a single man to die than a man with a family.

If you go to the cemetery of the Mount Pleasant Church in the town of Mount Salem, you will find a stone that has been erected with the following inscription:

"This monument is dedicated to the memory of Hiram Smith. The hero who sleeps beneath the sod here was shot in Palmyra, October 17, 1862 as a substitute for William T. Humphrey, my father."

That is what Jesus has done for us.

He has become our substitute.

And as a result, we have become an eternal monument to the riches of His mercy and to the overabundance of His grace.

Veterans' Day is an opportunity for us to thank those who loved enough to give their lives for others.

The cross is a monument that speaks to all who will hear.

It says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

*Bob Crowder*