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Memorial Day: Lest We Forget¹

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Psalm 34:18 KJV

The American tradition of Memorial Day began more than 100 years ago. It was at the end of a brutal war, a war in which brother fought brother and the best of friends became the worst of enemies. It was the Civil War, one of the worst wars ever fought by the people of this nation, and it was fought on our own soil. At the end of this war, family members of the many soldiers slain in battle would visit the grave sites of their fallen relatives or friends and decorate their graves with flowers.

On May 5, 1868, General John Logan proclaimed this day a holiday through his General Order No. 11. The day was entitled Decoration Day. It was first observed on May 30, 1868. The northern states celebrated this day every year, but the southern states celebrated a day similar to this on a different day until sometime after World War I.

In 1882, the name Decoration Day was changed to Memorial Day, and in 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday to be held on the last Monday of May every year. In addition to celebrating America’s fallen soldiers, Memorial Day evolved into a day of celebrating all people -- all of our ancestors and forefathers who have created the world we live in today, who have paved the long road we walk down into the future. It is a day to celebrate and thank all the people who died to create what we have today by the grace of God.

Memorial Day Prayer

Lord of the nations, on this day when we remember the struggles through which our country has gone in its efforts to preserve our liberties, we thank Thee for blessing us and making our people free. Most of all, we thank Thee for the blessings of religious liberty to preach The gospel without hindrance and to worship Thee according to the dictates of Thy holy and infallible Word.

We pray that You will hold Your gracious protecting hand over all the people of our nation. Guide those in authority and grant them the wisdom to govern so that peace and prosperity may be ours according to Thy will. Thou hast told us that a nation is blessed who worships the one true God. The Word declares, *“I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols”* **Isaiah 42:8 (ESV).** Therefore, we pray that the Gospel may be preached in all its truth and purity throughout our land.

Thank you for all of our many blessings. Help us to use these blessings and freedom to the fullest extent, so that through the length and breadth of our nation men may hear the Good News about Your saving grace. Bring to all people in the world the peace which surpasses all understanding. Thank you for loving us and redeeming us from all our sins. We ask it all in Jesus Name. **Amen.**

¹ http://desperatepreacher.com/a_memorialday.htm

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

