

THE HEART OF THE MATTER
John 15:9-17

I. OUR TODAYS FOR THEIR TOMORROWS

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. (15:16)

- A. Feeling the Effects.
 - 1. The last shot of the Civil War was fired in 1997.
 - 2. The effects of war linger on in the lives of the people and a nation for generations.
 - 3. How many of you have been in a war? On a scale of 1 to 10, what impact did it have on your life?
- B. Memorial Day.
 - 1. Do you remember the photograph of the five Marines raising an American flag on Iwo Jima?
 - 2. This is a time when we remember those who didn't come back.
 - 3. It's a day when we remember those who "gave the last, full measure of devotion." (Abraham Lincoln)
- C. An Uncomfortable Holiday.
 - 1. The concept of someone making sacrifices for us and dying for us makes us uneasy.
 - 2. Why did they do it? Was the cause worthy? Would we do the same?
- D. What Makes a Hero?
 - 1. Is our culture so superficial that we no longer recognize heroic qualities?
 - 2. The difference between a celebrity and a hero: "Celebrities ... make news, but heroes ... make history." (Daniel Boorstein)

II. NO GREATER LOVE

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (15:12-13)

- A. Unconditional, Sacrificial Love.
 - 1. This is not family affection or sexual desire or a feeling.
 - 2. His sacrifice was a choice, and it stands as the greatest act of love in history.
- B. The Chief Characteristic of Christianity.
 - 1. Is it power or prestige? Is it faith or hope?
 - 2. The chief characteristic is love. Love is greater than knowledge, faith, religious experience or service.
 - 3. Love is patient and kind. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.
- C. We Are Family.
 - 1. "This is my family, and we take care of each other."
 - 2. "As he died to make men holy, let us live to make men free."

Prayer Concerns: Burney Biesel, Kay Fowlkes, Charlotte Hart, Mac Kerr, Joe McDowell, Anne Miller, Ann Ramsey, Mildred Sentell, **Blake Stallings**, Jennifer Tarpley, Joe Tidwell, Jr., Ray Billings, Gerald Borden, Sarah Clark, Richard Cole, Cledus Creel, Rev. E.H. Denman, Jr., Jimmy Eubanks, Angela Fisher, Nancy Godsey, Laura Griffin, Rob Hammond, Fern Haslop, Abby Jones, Jeff Joyner, Mary Lou Lepping, Van Lynch, Catherine Mattheus, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Judy Owen, Theresa Patrick, David Petrie, Steve Raines, Patrick Ramage, Frances Wright ... **Christian Sympathy** is extended to *the family of Seymour Yates*, who died Thursday, May 18 ... to **Gene and Peggy Parnell** in the death of their great niece, **Kristi Jackson** ... to **Allyson Agee** in the loss of her grandfather, **Fred King** ... and to **Ann Ramsey** in the loss of her mother, **Aleatha Salmon** ...

PASTORAL PRAYER

O God of tender care, it's easy for us to lift our lives to you in gratitude for the riches of your grace. We are safe here in our sanctuary. There are no tanks rumbling down the streets of Dyersburg or suicide bombers trying to take our lives. There are no house to house searches or gun fire echoing in the background as we try to pray. Our families are not worried about our safety or concerned that we might not make it home. They don't watch the evening news to see if we are still safe or to receive word about our world. They know we will be home for supper. But we pray for those who are not so fortunate. We pray for those whose lives have been changed forever by the events of September 11, 2001 and a war that continues to rage. We pray for those who have made the supreme sacrifice, remembering how Jesus said: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." We remember with gratitude those who have sacrificed their lives for us.

Loving God, it's so easy for us to take for granted the freedom we enjoy and the safety of our city, and forget those who make that possible. Protect those who protect us. Bless those who have blessed us with the ability to walk around town, jog through our neighborhoods, drive down the street, and operate our businesses in safety. May we never forget those who serve and protect us. And may we never forget the One whose love and grace surrounds us in all the moments of our lives, whether we are in a war zone or Wal-Mart, whether we are fighting for our lives or just fighting for a parking space, Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

JOHN 15:9-17

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another."

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

June 4	<i>Communion and Communication</i>	Acts 2:1-21
	Pentecost Sunday	
June 11	<i>The Da Vinci Code</i>	Matthew 16:13-20
June 18	<i>Becoming a Man</i> Father's Day	2 Timothy 1:1-7
June 25	<i>Annetta Camp to Preach</i>	

On the Radio (1450 AM):

June 4	<i>Spring Concert</i>	Chancel Choir
June 11	<i>Lux Aeterna</i>	Chancel Choir
June 18	<i>The Other Bible</i>	2 Peter 2:2
June 25	<i>Beginning Again</i>	Revelation 21:5