

Monday, May 25, 2020—Memorial Day

A Forgotten Common Enemy

*You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day,
or the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
or the destruction that wastes at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.*
—Psalm 91:5-8

Today we honor those men and women who gave their lives in the service of our country. This is the day to remember those who died on land, sea and in the air, in battles dating as far back as 1775. Our thoughts turn to seas and battlefields all around our world and to the deadly violence of warfare, but in this line of thinking we miss a very large percentage of our war dead. There is another battle which I have never heard mentioned at any Memorial Day celebration, but deserves prominent mention, especially in this year of pandemic. I am referring to those who died from disease while in the wartime military.

It has only been for the last hundred years that more have died in wars from battle inflicted wounds than have died from diseases. Living in close quarters and enduring the elements out in the field have caused tens of thousands of fatalities as diseases quickly spread among soldiers and sailors. We read in the “Soldier’s Psalm,” Psalm 91, of snares, arrows, ramparts, shields and ramparts, and this only makes sense. What we find hard to grasp is the apparently equal or ever greater concern with plague and pestilence, but these evils were very much a part of ancient warfare. Modern antibiotics, vaccines and other medical treatments have eliminated most of these deaths, yet to this day disease remains a real foe. Such ailments as malaria continue to cause great misery among our service personnel.

Today we remember how so many went off to fight and die for us, and we are deeply grateful, for their death made our lives of freedom possible. As we remember their fight against cannons and rifles, let us also remember their battles against illness and infection, and may we borrow some of their courage as we find ourselves in a present-day battle so very much like theirs.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

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On this Remembrance Day we come, O Lord, in gratitude for all who have died that we may live, for all who endured pain that we might know joy, for all who suffered imprisonment that we might know freedom. Turn our deep feeling now into determination, and our determination into deed, that as men died for peace, we may live for peace for the sake of the Prince of Peace, even Jesus Christ our Lord. —Leslie Weatherhead

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of war:

For the injured and disabled,

For the mentally distressed,

And for those whose faith in God and man has been weakened or destroyed....

For the homeless and refugees,

For those who are hungry,

And for all who have lost their livelihood and security....

For those who mourn their dead,

For those who have lost husband or wife, children or parents,

And especially for those who have no hope in Christ to sustain them in their grief....

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, infinite in wisdom, love and power: have compassion on those for whom we pray; and help us to use all suffering in the cause of your kingdom, through him who gave himself for us on the cross, Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. —source unknown