

The Cost of Freedom

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“Freedom is Not Free” is the adopted motto of our KWVA. This phrase is etched on the granite wall of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in our nation’s capital. It is meant to honor those who gave their lives in the Korean War, to preserve the freedom of a small, unknown country against communism. Many paid the ultimate price while fighting bravely in the bloody war. They are buried, but not forgotten. On July 27, 1953 there was a ceasefire agreement at Panmunjom, which is observed as Armistice Day. Over 70s years later, the war is still not officially over; it is one of the longest wars in history. Like a temporarily dormant, but still active volcano, we do not know when it may erupt again. Therefore, our U.S. forces have been stationed in the Korean peninsula since the ceasefire to defend the Republic of Korea against the North. The price of freedom is still being paid.

In many ways, however, freedom is priceless. The debt of lives lost and blood shed cannot be repaid. Therefore, it is all the more imperative that the memory of their sacrifice be preserved and remembered. Most of those who did not return home were young men who had never heard of Korea before being sent off. Nearly 37,000 U.S. soldiers were killed in combat, with over 7,000 still missing. Although their resting place remains unknown, each and every missing soldier is buried in the hearts of their family members. Many of the missing were identified and their remains returned home at last to be buried with honor, some next to the graves of their parents who never got to see their sons after they left for the war. Our nation will remember them by name as the Wall of Remembrance at the Korean War Memorial will be dedicated next June 25, 2022.

The Bible declares: “God so loved the world to send his only Son to die on the cross to set mankind to be free from sin and death that anyone who believes in Him shall not die, but to have the eternal life” (John 3:16). Apostle Paul wrote, “For freedom Christ has set us free, stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1). This is the Good News. Jesus Christ sacrificed His life—He shed His precious blood to cleanse us of our sin. His blood has the power to set us free from the slavery of sin and death. What do we have to do in response to this Good News? The Bible says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).” Is there any reason why you would not want this most priceless gift of eternal life? Of true freedom from death?

In August 1968 I came home to Hilo, Hawaii for a 30-day furlough from the army. One afternoon a Baptist pastor visited me to share this Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. It was simple to understand. Until then, I had attended church and was educated at a mission school, but I did not have a personal relationship with Christ. My misunderstanding was that since I attended Sunday worship services, I was a Christian. But as the pastor explained to me what the Bible says about being a child of God, I was convinced that I was a sinner and separated from God, the Father. I repented of my sin of separation and asked for forgiveness. And I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. Since then, as I reflect on my spiritual journey of 53 years, I am so grateful to God to be set free from my sin and free from the penalty of sin—death—through eternal life in Christ Jesus. Because of this one decision, I was able to be commissioned later as an Army Reserve Chaplain in 1986 while I was a pastor in Berkeley, California. Over the years God has given me the privilege of sharing my faith with many, to

encourage them to trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior so that they too, can be free from sin and death. There is no greater joy than to live a life of freedom in Jesus Christ! He paid the price of freedom for all mankind. May God open your heart so that you may gain eternal life. Most of us are at an age where we must prepare to depart from this world. I pray you will be saved so that you can spend eternity with the Lord. May you find hope in Jesus Christ!

Prayerfully yours,