

THE GREATEST FALLEN HERO OF ALL

On the Sunday before Memorial Day, I almost always take time to honor our **fallen heroes**_ those service men and women who made supreme sacrifices for our nation. So, let us pause for a few moments to meditate upon how blessed we are because of the ones who served and died for us. [Video_ <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/58940/memorial-day-real-american-soldiers>] What a shame it is that so many will spend the day tomorrow enjoying their freedom, even celebrating their bounty without giving a thought to those who lay down their lives for them.

Sadder still is that week after week, the Lord's Day is often enjoyed by many as a day off from work without any thought for **the greatest Fallen Hero of all**_ the One who laid down His life, not just for this nation, but for all nations.

Some renowned Bible scholars dispute that idea_ limiting the scope of Jesus' sacrifice to a select few. They focus on Bible verses that stress the fact that Jesus gave His life for "*the elect*"_ more specifically for "*the church*." Though I respect those who've concluded such, I must respectfully disagree. Yes, Jesus died for "*the elect*," but I believe setting the boundaries of His love and sacrifice at "*the church property line*" is a serious mistake. For instance, take note of whom the Scriptures claim He died for...

John the Baptist said of Jesus in **John 1:29**, "**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" Now, obviously He doesn't take away our ability to sin_ or our choice to do so. The idea is that He takes away the consequence. For who? For the whole world_ or just some in the world? Well, let's read more...

John 3:16, which is often referred to as the Golden Text of the Bible, says, "**For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son...**" Notice that it is the world that God loved_ and that Jesus was sent to save. But, once more, the whole world? Or just part of it?

The Apostle Paul writes in **1st Timothy 2:5-6**, "**There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men - the testimony given in its proper time.**" Paul also writes in **1st Timothy 4:9-10**, "**This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance_ and for this we labor and strive_ that we have put our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.**" That seems quite clear. If there was doubt about the realm that God's love encompasses_ or the scope of our Savior's reach, it should be now removed. Jesus came to be the Savior of all men.

(Hebrews 2:9) "**We see Jesus, who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.**" Jesus suffered death for everyone. Some say that "*everyone*" is for everyone God loves_ but He doesn't love everyone, so that can't include EVERY last person who ever lived.

So, if you're not convinced that Jesus died for everyone, listen to John the Apostle in **1st John 2:2**. He declares of Jesus there: "**He Himself is the atoning sacrifice (*propitiation*_ payment) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**" He also wrote in **1st John 4:14**, "**And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.**" Again, pretty hard to misunderstand. God's love for the world and Jesus' sacrifice for sins includes all of us_ you, me, your friends, family, neighbors...and more.

Listen carefully now to **Romans 5:6-10**...

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!" Jesus died for ungodly sinners. He even died for His enemies_ which includes your enemies, too! If that's so, then everyone will be saved, right? Everyone gets to go to heaven and nobody gets left behind? Not quite. Why not? If Jesus died to save us all, why can't we all be saved? If He paid for the sins of the whole world, why would anyone have to pay for their own? Good question, and it's one that keeps the debate going.

If everyone can be saved_ and everyone can go to heaven, but not everyone will, what's the issue? Isn't Jesus' sacrifice more than enough to pay for the sins of the whole world, past, present and future? It's worth returning to that tried and true verse of **John 3:16**_ but this time, in its fuller context. **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:16-18)** Jesus died for all_ but not all will benefit. Those who believe_ who trust Him to save them will be saved. Those who do not will be lost. Later in the same chapter, **John 3:36**) says: **"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life..."**

It's not that Jesus' sacrifice was insufficient or that His blood lacked the power to save us all or that Heaven is too small a place to accommodate us all. Neither is God's love too shallow or the extent of His grace too narrow. God loves us all and his grace is super abundant. His son came to save you and me. He died for you and me.

One of the episodes of the 1960's TV series **"One Step Beyond"** depicted the following scenario: A woman wakes up from a nightmare in which she is drowning. A man has a vision of a huge passenger liner sinking. Both are revelations that the Titanic is headed for disaster. The ship is destined to hit an iceberg, crash and sink, resulting in the death of the bulk of the passengers. The only hope is to change course or abandon ship. Get in the life boats while you still can. But no one believed either of them. The ship had been called **"unsinkable."** The passengers and crew were all celebrating. It was smooth sailing_ enjoying life to the fullest. You know the end of the story.

Of course, these premonitions were unsubstantiated. Maybe they didn't really happen. Yet, the truth is that a message was sent to the Titanic from Cape Race, a wireless communication station on the shores of Newfoundland. It warned that they were heading straight into a huge icefield. Another ship, the Californian, had actually weighed anchor to avoid the collision after they got the same message_ and Cyril Evans, their Marconi operator even tried to relay it to warn the Titanic. But, Jack Phillips, the wireless signal operator on the Titanic replied with this message: **"Shut up...shut up. I am busy."** What was he busy with? Sending messages from passengers to family and friends elsewhere. I'd be surprised if at least a few didn't say, **"Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here."**

God sent Jesus to tell us all that this world is going to eventually crash and burn. Rather than supply a few lifeboats, He was and still is **The Lifeboat** with more than enough room for everybody.

In essence, He said **“Trust me. Turn around and follow me and you’ll be saved. But reject me and what I’m telling you and you’ll certainly perish. I’ve not come to condemn any of you but to save you all. I’m truly the way to eternal rest and safety.”** Yet, too many reply, *“Shut up. I am busy.”* So, think about it. Jesus gave His life for you. Believe it, admit it, and you will be saved. Period. Deny it, ignore Him, reject His sacrifice_ and_ well_ you won’t.

Hebrews 9:26 says that **“(Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”** Jesus suffered once for all time_ and for all mankind. Will we honor Him? If you will, I think many dishonor our fallen heroes by abusing their freedoms (*guy in train station*).

We also dishonor the greatest of fallen heroes when we abuse our freedom from sin’s consequence and control – perceiving His sacrifice as a license to live anyway we choose.

Prayer for God’s guidance in how to honor the fallen with our lives.