

A Worthier Cause – An Armistice Day Meditation • Remembrance Day

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MAIN VERSES

[Genesis 18](#) • [Genesis 19](#) • [Genesis 20](#) • [Genesis 21](#) • [Genesis 22](#) • [Genesis 22:18](#) • [Genesis 18:24-25](#) • [Ezekiel 33:11](#) • [Exodus 34:6-7](#) • [Deuteronomy 6:4](#) • [Luke 4:13](#)

Shabbat Shalom. Father, we bless you. We honor you. We praise you. We invite you, Holy Spirit. We desire you in this place. Come and have your way. And we will be careful, Father, to declare your mighty works. You are the one. You are the only one. And we worship you this morning in spirit and in truth. Thank you, Father.

Come Behold the Works of God

Oh, come behold the works of God, the nations at his feet. He breaks the bow and bends the spear and tells the wars to cease. O mighty one of Israel, you are on our side. We walk by faith in God who burns the chariots with fire.

Sing that again. O come, behold the works of God, the nations at his feet. He breaks the bow and bends the spear and tells the wolves to cease. O mighty one of Israel, you are on our side. We walk by faith in God who burns the chariots with fire. Now hold your way, the fire, with us as a shout, with us in the storm. Where else would we go but with the Lord our God?

Take a fierce and great voice and speak. Earthly bowels and mountains move to the sea. The hearts of men still remember God who makes the mountains melt. The one who calms the wind and waves and makes my heart be still. Though the earth gives way, the mountains move into the sea, the nations rage—I know my God is in control. Though the oceans roar, you are the Lord of all, the one who calms the winds and makes my heart be still.

Though the earth gives way, the mountains move into the sea, the nations rage, I knock the fire. With us as a shelter, with us in the storm. You will battle, where else would we go? With us as a shelter, with us in the storm. Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father.

You Lead Us in Good Ways

You are a good shepherd. You lead us. You lead us in good ways, down right paths. And we thank you, Father. We can trust you, Father. Sometimes I find there's a fork in the road. Should I stay? Should I try to climb higher? To do what I'm made for, to know the good shepherd, to breathe in the air of the mountains. Fill my lungs with the air of the mountain. You are a holy God. You are a holy God. My vision in the high, oh, in miles and miles high. I don't see you getting tired.

Oh, good shepherd, follow where you lead us. Cause your steps attest to the strength of the ground before me. Fear cannot hold me. I'm set on the mystery. Your invitation is calling me. Though faint is my strength, you're my eyes, you're the way. You give grace to my fate, so I'm climbing. You give me strength to my day, so I'm climbing. You are my holy God. You are vision in my eyes and my time. I don't forget time, shepherd, where you lead me. Cause your steps attest to the strength of the ground before me. You're so faithful to take. So faithful, it all may be wild, but I know you're with me. Yes, Lord, I know that I know. I know that I know. Bless you, Father. Oh, do you know he's faithful? He is so faithful. Bless you, Lord. Oh, we worship you. Oh, I love you. I love you, Abba. So, thank you.

The Foothills Are No Place Anymore

Foothills are no place for us anymore. He said, follow me. So I'm following. Oh, the foothills are no place for me anymore. Even broken feet cannot keep me from seeking the one who faced death out of love for me. He said, follow me. Come on. So I'm following. Oh, the foothills are no place for me anymore. So faithful. The way may be long, may be wild. But I know you're with me. I know you're with me, Lord. I'm so thankful. So faithful.

Faithful You Are

Oh, we bless you, we praise you. Oh, you are with us. You've always been with me. Always leading every step. Never unclear, never unclear with your voice. You are so faithful. Never unclear with your leadership. Faithful to take the lead for us. Oh, bless you. Your leadership, it's always perfect. Oh, we love you. You are so perfect. The good shepherd of our heart. Faithful, your faith for you. Faithful you'll be. Pour out our praise for the way you lead. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be forever. So faithful.

Sing faithful you are. Faithful you'll be. We pour out our praise for the way you lead. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be forever. So faithful. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be. Pour out our

praise for all the way you lead. Forever. Hallelujah, forever. You are faithful to us. Faithful, faithful you'll be. I'll praise for the way you lead. Faithful you are. Yes, faithful you'll be. I'll praise for the way you lead. The shepherd of where you lead. Oh, we follow you wherever you lead. Cause your steps have tested the strength of the ground before. The shepherd faithful to take. And the wave may be long. May be wild, but I know you are with me. Hallelujah. Oh, you're with me.

Shepherd our hearts. Shepherd our hearts. Oh, shepherd us. We need you, the great shepherd. Love you. So faithful. You are. Faithful you'll be. Pour out our praise for the way you lead. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be forever. So faithful. Let's sing that again. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be. Pour out our praise for the way that you lead. Faithful you are. Faithful you'll be forever. Thank you for being a good shepherd. So trustworthy. Yeshua is here. Yes. He knows. He knows. He knows where we each are. And he is a good shepherd. And his strength has tested the ground before you. And if he says go, you can trust it's a good thing to go, even if it doesn't feel like a good thing.

Yeshua Is in This Room

We worship you. Yeshua is in this room. Yeshua is in this room. Here I am, making this place I stand holy ground, holy ground. Holy ground. We worship you, God. Your spirit pours out all good and perfect things, flowing, flowing on. It's the same time we have song in the sanctuary. I'm singing holy word, forever singing along with the saints. You'll be forever the King of all. The doors fling wide, I see glory as I run inside your throne. Before you I bow. The bell is torn and the doors fling wide, I see God inside your throne. You'll be forever the king and throne. Glorious splendor all over you. You'll be forever the queen and splendor you are. You'll be forever the splendor you are. You'll be forever the king. I've got my whole town before you. I lift my hands up, lay my hope down. The town is for you. Oh, praise to the Lord most high. Oh, praise to the one who saved my life. Praise to Jesus Christ. I'm king of heaven. I'm king forever. You're a king. We worship you. Yeshua is in this room. This I stand. Holy ground. This is holy ground. Holy ground. We worship you. Holiness of the Spirit. Wonders of your miraculous way. Take us to the deep. Holy you'll be. Holy you'll be. You are holy. Holy you'll be. Lift your praise. We declare your holiness. You are holy, holy, oh. Lift your praise, oh, we worship you. Worship you.

No Wonder the Angels Adore You

No wonder the angels adore you. No wonder creation bows before you. No wonder the angels cry holy. Night and day, day and night, night and day. No wonder the angels adore you. No wonder creation bows before you. No wonder the angels cry holy. Day and night, night and day. Day and night, night and day. Holy, holy. You are. You'll be holy. You are. Who was and is and is to come. Holy. Ha-sheer, ha-ee-oh. Holy, holy, holy.

Every time, oh, every time we gaze upon you. Every time I gaze upon you, you give me a reason to love you. Love you. Sing it out. Every time I look upon you, I am changed, rearranged, never the same. No wonder the angels adore you. No wonder creation bows before you. No wonder the angels cry holy. Day and night, night and day. Day and night, night and day. No wonder the angels adore you. No wonder creation bows before you. No wonder the angels cry holy. Day and night, night and day. Day and night, night and day. You're holy. You are holy. Holy, holy. You're the praise we bring. We worship you, Father. We exalt you, Abba. He's singing songs of deliverance so we rest this morning. We exalt you in this place, Father. Higher above anything, anything in our lives. I will exalt you.

Exalt the Lord

Exalt the Lord at his feet. Exalt the Lord at his feet. He is holy for me. He is holy for the Lord. He is holy for the Lord our God. He is holy. You are holy. So exalt, exalt the Lord. Worship at his feet. Exalt the Lord, we worship at his feet. He is mighty. He's mighty. For he is mighty. Yes. For the Lord our God, he is mighty. For the Lord our God, he is mighty. For the Lord our God, he is worthy. Tell him how he's so worthy, God. He is worthy. You are holy, our God. Yes, he is holy. He is holy. Tell him how he's holy. Hallelujah. You are mighty, mighty, mighty. You are. He is worthy, worthy, worthy. How our God. Holy, holy, holy, holy. Holy. How our God. He is holy. Oh, Lord. Our God. Holy. Let's lift our hands and surrender to him. You are holy. You are holy. We lift our voices to you. You alone are king, the King of Kings. Oh, we worship you. Yahweh. Yahweh. We love you. Holy, holy. Oh, perfect in all your ways. Thank you. We lift our praise. You and you are worthy. You're so worthy. Thank you, Father. We worship you, Father. We lift our praise. You're a holy and righteous God. So kind. So loving. So faithful. So gracious. You lead us down good paths. You care for us.

Whatever's holding you back this morning from releasing the fullness of your worship to the Father, just let it go. Father, we desire that this praise, this worship would be a sweet aroma to you this morning. That you would look upon the praise of your people and that you would write a scroll of remembrance.

We Praise and Release Our Worship

Father, we know that you are a good God and we know that you are one who acts on our behalf. Your word says that we need but stand and see the deliverance of our God. You go before us. You stand with us. You're always beside us. Your word says that you never leave us or forsake us. So, Father, we just release this praise to you this morning. This worship, Father, and we let it rise because you are worthy of it. Let it rise. Praise ascend. Glory to the Lamb. Let it rise. Praise again. Glory to the Lamb. Let it rise. Praise again. Glory to the Lamb. Sing it out. Let it rise. Praise again. Glory to the Lamb. Let it rise. Praise again. Glory to the Lamb. Sing holy, sing worthy, worthy. We declare him worthy, worthy, worthy, worthy, worthy. We sing holy, holy, holy, holy, yes, holy. And what? And what will we worship you, King Jesus? We love you, love you, King Jesus. You're worthy, you're worthy. Worthy are you, Lord. We worship you. We worship you. We worship you. Wonderful Father, we thank you for the refreshing in this hour. You are so beautiful. None compares to you. Continue, Father, continue to speak, Ruach, continue to have your way. We honor you. We praise you. And we are so grateful. And it's in Yeshua's name. Amen. Give him praise. Hallelujah.

You may be seated. Does anybody remember the first time I did this? I was like way down here the whole time. I figured this thing out. You really got to be smarter than it. Okay.

So I pray that this portion—I didn't overwork it because the last two times you guys said that you were benefited by it, and I hardly had any time to make any coherent sense of my notes. So this time was different. I had time. So hopefully I didn't kill it that way. Okay, Torah portion, Genesis chapter 18 through 22, called the era or he appeared.

Have you ever been reading your Bibles and you were like, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, God did this and he did that. He was good. He's good. He did this. And you get to that one part and you don't want to read that one part because it makes you kind of not like God anymore—just for that moment, maybe just for a second. I do that, and it bothers me because there are parts of scripture I intentionally avoid because I can't reconcile the fact that God could be this, but he can also be this. And it's like his perfect unity agrees with both somehow, even though I don't sometimes. Do you think God should look for my approval about who he is?

The Chapters and Abraham's Faith

So in 18, Abraham is visited by God in the form of a man. In 19, the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. In chapter 20, God prevents King Abimelech from sinning. In 21, the birth of Isaac

and the banishment of Hagar. In 22, Abraham is told to offer up his only son. Wasn't that a good Torah portion, guys?

A thought that I had over and over as I read about these events is, is God just? A straight answer was what I needed to take from reading these chapters. I found that as I read and studied, I desperately needed to explore some questions about God that have always troubled me. Because of that, I'm glad this portion plopped into my lap.

God appears to Abraham as a man in chapter 18, with two others who are described as angels in the next chapter. Abraham provides means to wash their feet and stands by them as a servant, and they enjoy the best hospitality he could provide on short notice. Abraham humbled himself before God. God promises that Sarah will conceive a son in about a year, and she did. That's all good. We've got the thumbs up still for God, right? Our approval for his character.

Jesus' mother was told by an angel that she would conceive a son that would fulfill the promises God made to Abraham on that day. God told him, in your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed in Genesis chapter 22, because you obeyed my voice. When Jesus became a man, he not only provides water for washing, as Abraham did for him so long ago, but he himself takes off his outer garment and washes the feet of these men himself. God was higher than Abraham, yet he stooped lower than Abraham.

The Outcry from Sodom

Is this the same God who could annihilate two cities? Is that thumb like this? God heard the outcry rising up from Sodom. He tells Abraham he's going to judge it, or at least see what kind of judgment it requires. But why is there crying in Sodom? Why? Why?

In Egypt, why was there crying? People were oppressed. Guessing there was a lot of kids. Guessing there was a lot of innocent. Maybe orphans. Maybe widows. The kind of people you don't mess with if you fear God.

Chapter 19 Genesis explains everything. I've read and heard it many times and it still shocks me. It's about Sodom and Gomorrah. I've included chapter 19 only as a reference though because it is not friendly to innocent audiences in the least. That's how bad it is.

Chapter 20, Abraham sojourns in Negev. His wife is taken by King Abimelech to be his bride under the false assumption that she is unmarried. Abraham told his wife to act like his sister to protect himself. God tells the king that he is as good as dead because of this. And Abimelech says that he had no idea what he'd done. Then God said to him in a dream: yes, I myself knew

that you did this with integrity of your heart. So I, yes, I myself prevented you from sinning against me. That is why I didn't allow you to touch her. Clearly God is merciful.

Isaac and Ishmael

So Sarah in 21 bears Isaac as he promised. After winning him, Abraham threw a huge party, but Abraham's son Ishmael, whom he fathered by his servant Hagar, mocked. So Sarah tells Abraham to kick Hagar and her son out. But this didn't sit well with Abraham. Yet God told him to listen to Sarah and that he would take care of them and bless them anyway. The same God told Abraham to kick this young man and his mother out. And the same God chose to take care of Ishmael and make him a great nation also.

In chapter 22, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Let that sink in. I never let that sink in, ever, because it's one of those yucky parts, or at least I tell myself that, because I don't get it. He obeys. But God tells him to stop right before he follows through.

The difference? God did not stop when it was his only son who was the only acceptable sacrifice for mankind. He followed through. He didn't say stop. He told Abraham to stop. Well, Isaac couldn't have done the job anyway, but God again stooped lower than us to serve us in a way we couldn't repay. Clearly, God humbled himself.

Is God Just?

I've honestly questioned Yahweh in my heart for things like destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, telling Abraham to send Hagar away, and telling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. So, is God just though?

Abraham himself questions God's justice, saying in 18:24-25. God is not a liar. He said he would not destroy them if only 10 righteous were found. They weren't found.

I truly do not think we can imagine the depth of evil in that place at that time that God had to do this. I don't think we can imagine it. And if we tell ourselves we do, I think we need to stop and realize that there were no child protection agencies. There were not the social safeties we enjoy in place. There were freedoms back then that we should be grateful we don't have for the evil in our midst.

In order for Yahweh to have destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—honest question. Please be honest. If we think God's judgment is cruel in any of these instances, we have forgotten how the

same one loves mercy and kindness and peace. The one who allowed Hagar and Ishmael to be kicked out washed the dirt from the toes of 10 men. Or, I'm sorry, 12 men.

God's Compassion and Justice United

Ezekiel 33:11. One of my favorite verses in the whole Bible. After chapters of terrible judgment on evil, wicked people, say to them: As I live, it is a declaration of Yahweh. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Let that sink in. But let the wicked turn from his way and live. Return, return from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel? He's begging them to live. Please live.

Let me come back around to the first thing that I kept reading over and over in these passages. Is God just? Are there parts of himself that we think are dirty, tainted, or God forbid, even evil? We cannot have God's grace without his justice.

We may wish to compartmentalize him into his grace side and his justice side, but he tells us we're not to look at him through our broken lenses. They're broken lenses. But to believe that he alone is holy. Then Adonai passed before him and proclaimed: Adonai, Adonai, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth, showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished, but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children to the third and fourth generation. Is that sadistic? Is God sadistic? Is that who he is? I've asked that myself before, and I'm not afraid to say it because God already knew it before I told you.

So if we ever forget whether he should be allowed to keep making these big decisions on his own, let's read the book of Job. Justice and mercy are firmly within his very capable hands. His attributes cannot be separated from each other.

So may he give us all ears to hear, O Israel, Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one. I needed this portion. Thank you for the opportunity for me to flesh this out. Thank you, Zach. Appreciate you so much. Shabbat shalom, everybody. Good to come back together today.

Announcements and the Weather

Let's go ahead and shoot for some announcements. The sun is out. This is great. Three, four days of rain, clouds, and sun pops out. You just get happier. Is that just me? Some people. Some people with conditions? I don't know. Let's see. Let me get the announcements up. Lots of

exciting stuff going on. And starting with Young Adults Fellowship. This is great. Yes, this is exciting.

Young Adults at the Renaissance Festival

Tomorrow, the Young Adults Group is meeting at the Carolina Renaissance Festival. Turkey legs and jousting. This is going to be great. Don't forget to purchase your tickets at the big ol' long website, bigtickets.com. Children ages four and under get in for free. So the more you have, the more value that goes along with it. It's like health insurance, right?

We will meet at the entrance of the festival at 11 a.m. and check in together. Everybody is free to stay as short or as long as they like. We're planning to get some photos of our group, so we will probably take them closer to the beginning. That way, if everyone needs to leave early, we don't leave them out. I added that part—wasn't... I'm kidding. I assume that's Hannah, yeah. Jonathan and Hannah are going in costumes, so if you want to as well, you won't be alone. Whatever you decide, just make sure you wear shoes that are comfortable to walk in. We're so excited to see everyone there.

So who's excited about going? All kinds of people yelled out that you're all too old. Young adults only.

Growing Our Young Adults Ministry

Let's see here. The Fit Young Adults group is growing rapidly, so we will be making some slight changes to our structure in 2023. We will be offering bi-monthly or quarterly events for 18 to 25-year-olds where either the Mayhorns or Coens will be there to facilitate. That's neat. Bi-monthly or quarterly events for 26 to 35-year-olds. I just turned 36. Okay. Fine. It's going to be cool. It's expanding.

And monthly blended events where all the group members can come fellowship together. That's really neat, guys. It's really cool to see the ministries at Founded in Truth growing and evolving because that's what we're called to do and supposed to do. And so I'm really excited to have leaders over the Young Adults group that see that vision. So thank you, guys. This is great.

November 26th: Oneg and Adoption Celebration

Awesome. And the 26th of November, Oneg. People are cheering. Been here a while. We used to have Oneg every single month. Logistics has prevented us. Oneg is a fancy term—it's a slang

term we use in Hebrew—that basically means potluck. We're going to have a potluck meal together after services on the 26th.

And it's twofold. One is our annual tradition of having a post-Thanksgiving potluck. So have Thanksgiving with our family at home. Come and have Thanksgiving with our family at church. It's going to be amazing. Another reason why we are going to be doing it is celebrating an adoption that's happening in our family. So it's going to be great. And it's been a long time coming. And so I felt it appropriate to do a type of dedication ceremony with our daughter, just like we did with our son seven years ago. And that will be part of it.

Baby Dedications: Failure and Commitment

And I want to make an announcement because I guess leadership—I mean me—feels like we've failed the community in several different aspects. But one of them is that I have not done a good job on encouraging people to participate in something that has been available, but I have not marketed it or let you guys know that it is absolutely available and appropriate for things like baby dedications. And I'm a bit ashamed of that.

It's not something that we've done a lot of. And that was a place of failure on my part because that's the lifeblood of our fellowship. I did not do a good job on checking with parents. In my mind, waiting on people to come to me, which should have been my responsibility—or leadership's responsibility—to reach out to parents and say, hey, is this something that you want to optionally take part in?

It's a simple ceremony—a dedication—dedicating the child not only about you raising the child up in the kingdom ethic after Yeshua, but also the responsibility of you committing to surrounding that child and raising them up as a community. And I apologize. I apologize.

And I don't know how I can ever make that up to parents that feel like it was never an option for them. But going forward, I'm going to do my best, along with other leadership, to make that option available and let you know it's available. And I want you to know you have the freedom to request it, because it's absolutely appropriate. Whether a newborn dedication or an adoption celebration, an adoption dedication—all of it, all of it, whatever, hybrids—it all celebrates God working in this community. And so we'll be doing that on the 26th as well. So, 26th, there will be no breakfast supply because we're going to be eating lunch after. Everybody good? Okay.

Israel Trip: Decision Time

Israel trip. As you know, we're taking an Israel trip at the end of December, and it's going to be absolutely amazing, and we're tweaking a few things in the agenda that we feel like are going to be more beneficial. It's going to be amazing. You guys know. You've heard it.

If you are interested in going and you haven't come to a decision yet—you need to come to that decision today. You need to let me know today if this is something you want to participate in. I got my foot in the door. It's about to shut off. And so let me know, please, if there is interest and you're on the fence and you want to make that decision. It's going to be fantastic. We're super excited about it.

Bible Study, Volunteers, and Prayer

Teen Bible Study, first and third Wednesday of each month at the church, 6:30 p.m. This will run in a separate room from the Women's Bible Study, which is now back in full swing on Wednesday nights.

Volunteers! Who's a volunteer here? Everybody, right? Thank you, guys. All volunteers, remember to complete your profiles in Realm and fill them out, especially your availability to serve. If you need help on how to complete the availability portion of your volunteer profile on Realm, which is our church system, please shoot Amy an email at amy, A-M-Y, at foundedinTruth.com, and we will get you helped out.

Don't forget, guys, if you ever need prayer during the week, not sure who you can call on, we have an online portal with dedicated people here who check it every single day. Leadership is on it every single day. It's public to the world—not just people here participate—and you can post your request anonymously or as yourself and see other requests. You can pray for them, and it's neat. Some people say it's a little cheesy, but it's neat.

There's a little "I pray for this" button that you can hit. And it seems cheesy, but at the same time, it's also nice when you submit a prayer request and actually see people saying, yes, I have prayed for you, even though they're on the other side of the world or the U.S. or so on and so forth. And so take that opportunity to participate in lifting up other people's prayers and being involved with that.

Faithfulness Through Generosity

Offering time and money. Money. I love talking about money. It's always awkward talking about money. So money is the thing. Money is the thing that will make the long-term impact of this

community. And when I say that, I mean Shabbat services. Money is the thing that will allow them to be long-term. Money is the thing that will allow children's classes to be long-term, youth classes to be long-term, ministry opportunities to be long-term, charity, both in and out of the community, to be long-term. Money is the thing that will allow us to see our children graduate the classes in the children's program. Such things as this.

And I'm sure so many of you are faithful in that regard. And I thank you for being part of that, joining me in doing that for this community. And faithfulness is one of those things that we attribute to many things. Faithful to your spouse. We understand the weight and the gravity of that. Faithful to your family. Faithful to your job. Faithful to your nation or your country.

I want to invite you, if you're an active participant in this community, this church, this ministry, I want to encourage you to take a step in being faithful to it in that regard. And what that looks like for the long-term longevity of this fellowship—being faithful means putting money toward where you hope the trajectory of these things goes. That's what faithfulness looks like. And so I want to encourage you in that.

No secret at Founded in Truth: anything given to Founded in Truth is not a want at this point; it's a need. Specifically in general giving. And so thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for your prayer. Thank you for your time and energy. I understand the value and cost of time and energy. So thank you, volunteers, for pouring into the families here. We appreciate you so much.

Blessing the Children

Now, a joyful time, the time of blessing the children. So please stand as we bless the children. Kids, you guys can come up. Every single week here at Founded in Truth Fellowship, we have a tradition where we thank God for the visible blessing that he's given to us as a community. And we pray over the kids and we bless them. And we hang a shawl over them that we call a chuppah. It represents the blessings of God over them. And it's my favorite part of Shabbat. All right, everybody ready?

If you're joining us online, I encourage you, if you have children around you, you can symbolically place your hands over their heads or raise your hands up.

If you're at home right now and maybe you don't have any children with you, I invite you to raise your hands right now and join us collectively as we thank God for the next generation that he has charged us to be mentors to. Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this Sabbath, this one day of the week of creation that you carved out and gave to us as a

sign, as a signet of the true eternal rest that is only found in your Son, King Yeshua. Father, I ask that you would bless the young men here today as Ephraim and Manasseh, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that you would instill in them a blessing of wisdom, strength, focus on your kingdom, that they will be the witnesses and carriers of the banner of the gospel and of your kingdom into their generation. And the young ladies here, Father, that you would bless them as Rachel and as Leah, even as Sarah and Rebecca, that they would be faithful, Father, that they would have allegiance toward your kingdom, that you would give them wisdom, discernment, boldness, and courage to march into the land carrying your promises, proclaiming them to everyone they see. The youth, I ask for a blessing—the same spirit of Caleb, the same spirit of Joshua, the spies that understood your promises, were told your promises, and ran to the mountaintops with courage and boldness, ready to conquer, not cowering in the valleys below. We thank you. In the name of Yeshua HaMashiach, our King, we pray. Amen.

Blessing the Next Generation

Please join us as we say the prayer of our Master, and I invite everybody here to pray it out loud, to say it out loud—not only as an individual, but it's a way that we teach our children. Everybody ready? All right. You ready? Do you ever find yourself something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of. A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth.

As you know, yesterday is an internationally recognized, I would dare say, holiday known as Armistice Day. In the U.S., it came to be known as Veterans Day. And so I invited a historian that I have the utmost respect for—someone who would not only be the most qualified to speak a message recognizing this day, but also bring forth something that's edifying for the kingdom. And so I would like to introduce to you retired Lieutenant Colonel Al McCarn, my friend, mentor, and an amazing warrior of the gospel of Yeshua.

Honoring Our Fathers and Mothers

Thank you very much. Can you hear me now? Okay. Let's see. If you heard Zach with the Torah portion, I love the way that God orchestrates things, because if you heard Zach's heart, you will hear some of my heart in what I want to present.

One of the things that I am most convinced about is that one of Satan's greatest tactics is to separate us from our past. And even today, we have those who would say, "We can't talk about this person, that person, that cause, whatever happened 100 years ago because it's just not

right." Well, my Messiah said, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." I'm going to tell you some stories of what has made me, me, because I want to honor my fathers and mothers.

So let's pray. Father, we do thank you that you brought us together and you have put us here at this nexus in time. And you have made each one of us who we are today by weaving yourself through the generations that have made us today. So Lord God, we do honor our fathers, our mothers, going back to our first father and mother. And Lord, we know none of them and none of us are perfect, but you are the perfect redeeming God. So may their stories and our stories be quickened to our hearts so we may turn these things over to you and to the redemption that brings glory and honor to your name. We pray it in the name of Jesus, Yeshua, our Messiah, Lord of all men. Amen.

Veterans Day and Armistice Day

Well, this national holiday we celebrate this season has been called Veterans Day since 1954. It is intended as a day to honor American veterans of all wars. Keep that in mind. All American veterans of all wars. I want to come back to that point. First, though, we should remember that this Veterans Day holiday was originally called Armistice Day, in remembrance of the day fighting ended on the Western Front in World War I. Keep that in mind as well. An armistice is not an end to a war, but a temporary end to fighting. In other words, it's a truce that continues until a set time or until peace can be negotiated.

The armistice that stopped the fighting in Europe at 11 a.m. on the 11th of November 1918 happened because the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish enemies of the allied nations had lost the will to continue the fight. The hardship and loss of the previous four years extended far beyond the battlefields of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The suffering endured by the peoples of those empires metastasized into discontent that translated into withdrawal of support for their governments. Revolution spread through each empire just as it had in Russia the year before. And with the same effect, the warriors of those realms joined the people, declaring with their actions that they would no longer bear the burden of a war that seemed only to benefit their rulers.

And it could easily have gone the other way. Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium were just as war-weary as their enemies. The balance that tipped in their favor came with the timely insertion of American warriors into the fight just as the Russians dropped out. The summer and fall of 1918 marked the rapid shift in the fortunes of war. There seemed no end to the men and materiel in

the pipeline from the United States, and so Kaiser Wilhelm's generals bowed to the inevitable and urged a negotiated settlement.

A Year of Separation

The armistice came at just the right moment for my grandfather, Corporal Garland Victor McCarn of the 106th Engineer Battalion. His unit had just arrived in France when the armistice was declared. That meant he didn't have to endure the terrible ordeal of war in the trenches, but he did have to help clean up the mess. By the time of his discharge in May 1919, he had endured a year of separation from his beloved wife and their infant son.

I never had opportunity to ask my grandfather Garland about his time in the army. I have the letters he and my grandmother exchanged while he was away, and the little I've read of them tells me his concern was for the family he left in Alabama, not the perils he would face in France. He was just short of his 30th birthday when he was drafted in 1918. His first son, my uncle Joe, had been born only two months earlier. Until then, keeping up with current events was, for Garland, nothing more than an academic exercise. When he donned the uniform of the United States Army, the academic exercise became a new and frightening reality.

President Woodrow Wilson had said, "America's entry into the war would make the world safe for democracy." Well, that sounded nice, but what would it mean for a man who might never see his son enjoy such a safer democratic world? It's hard for the dead to make a difference for the living. I believe my grandfather understood that. It would be much better if he could come home and shepherd his family through the post-war world, whatever that might look like, and it would be better still if he could help his comrades in arms come home to do the same for their families.

That's not the attitude of a coward, but of a man who wisely chooses his battles, avoiding foolish risks that might seem brave but might not achieve the desired ends.

True Warriors Choose Battles Wisely

My grandfather was a true warrior, even though he never saw combat. A warrior is a bit different than a veteran. Veterans deserve honor for their service to the country, whether they serve in war or in peace. We honor them for the time they serve, regardless of the motivations that lead them to divert that time from the things they would rather be doing. Veterans serve for many reasons. Some trade their service for college money and other benefits, some to gain experience for a better job, and some are drafted into the service of their country at a time of

great need. Some even choose military service over jail time. Whatever the reasons, they still serve, and they deserve honor.

The question, though, is whether their service changes them for the better. If they leave the service with a greater sense of their purpose in life and of their duty to their fellow citizens and humanity as a whole, then they're well on the way to becoming warriors. They may have entered service as self-centered children seeking the thrills of battle in foreign lands, but they've learned that such thrills are momentary and always come at a cost in blood, sweat, and tears, whether their own or someone else's.

Thus, true warriors are those who attach themselves to a cause that justifies the cost. Time and experience are the best teachers in this process. Older recruits like my grandfather learn the lessons and pass through the transition relatively quickly. They know how precious and short life is, and they know what is really important. They don't sell themselves cheaply for the momentary thrill of lobbing a hand grenade, sweeping the field with a machine gun, or stepping out of an airplane with only a parachute between themselves and an ugly death. If they're going to put their lives on the line, they choose to do so for a cause that will live long after they are gone and bring a greater measure of peace and happiness to those they leave behind.

Learning from the Generations

These are the lessons my grandfather learned from his father, Josiah Easley McCarn. My great-grandfather was also a veteran, but not of the United States Army. He served in the Army of the Confederate States of America. It's not popular these days to acknowledge anyone connected to the Confederacy, and it can be offensive to honor them.

It seems we've forgotten that Veterans Day is a day to honor all American veterans of all wars, including those who served in wars that have lost their popularity due to the shifting sands of public opinion and the tendency of people to pass summary judgment before investigating a matter thoroughly. I honor my great-grandfather because he too was a true warrior. Unlike his youngest son Garland, Josiah was not drafted into service at the mature age of 30, but freely enlisted at the age of 15.

His motivation was not to preserve the institution of race-based slavery, as one might suppose, if all they hear are slogans based on shallow stereotypes. I've studied enough of the American Civil War to verify that slavery was a major factor in the division of our nation. But it was not the only cause. The census of 1850 indicates that my family did own three slaves. And that may

have been a factor for my great-grandfather's service to the Confederacy. But not in the way you suppose. Let me explain by telling Josiah's story.

A Blended Family

He was born into a blended family. His father, Neil, had two sons and a daughter by his first wife. After she died, he remarried and fathered Josiah and his older brother Daniel. Neil died in 1849 when Josiah was only a year old. His widow was left to raise five children under the age of 10, three of them by her husband's first wife. Although I can't say for sure, it's possible she acquired the services of black slaves to help with the farm and the children. And that changed a few years later when she married a new husband, Henry B. Martin, a schoolteacher from New York who had recently come to Alabama. This is the man my great-grandfather Josiah came to know as his father.

His views of the world differed from the views of his neighbors on many things. I'm not sure where exactly he stood on the questions of race relations and politics, but I do know that his views prompted him to take a different path when Alabama seceded from the Union in January 1861. I haven't yet found the military record of Henry B. Martin, and I'm not sure I ever will. The story passed down through our family is that he was an officer in the headquarters guard of William Tecumseh Sherman. If that's true, then he was part of the 1st Alabama Cavalry, the only white unit from Alabama that served in the Union Army. His name doesn't appear on the regiment's rosters, which is not a surprise. Many of the men of that regiment served under assumed names for obvious reasons. It was treason that they chose to abandon their state and fight alongside the Yankee invaders. Or so some would have seen it.

The Warrior's Dilemma

Those who favored the Union had a different view of such men and instead regarded men like Colonel Robert E. Lee as traitors. Lee had been offered command of the army being assembled at Washington, D.C., to preserve the Union. As a native Virginian, however, he couldn't take up arms against his state, and so he made a painful decision to resign his commission and protect his homeland by serving the Confederacy.

Lee's story conveys the heart pain of the warrior. Those who know little more than sound bites, memes, and slogans will miss the depths and nuances of the wrestlings in a warrior's heart. Lee was sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, and he'd done so many times over his military career. However, the onset of civil war meant that keeping his oath

would require him to deprive his kin of life, liberty, and property. If you were confronted with a choice like that, what would you decide? And what would you decide if you knew that whatever your decision, half of the people you love would hate and revile you for the rest of your life? These are the things a warrior thinks about.

There is no way to sit out the process. Not to choose is a choice to let others decide for you and to relinquish your ability to influence the situation. Robert E. Lee retained that much and more. And so did Henry B. Martin, although his story is not so well known. I surmise that in 1861 he had to leave his home very quickly so that his unionist sentiments wouldn't become a danger to his family. And thereafter, he was probably caught up in the guerrilla war that waged across the mountainous region where Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia come together. Not all Southerners favored secession, after all.

The Road to War

Whatever their views on slavery, they preferred to remain part of the Union, or at least resist the efforts of the Confederacy's pro-slavery leaders to make their homeland something they didn't like. The result was the kind of irregular warfare where the line between true warriors and violent criminals becomes blurred. And those who suffer the most are the civilians who happen to be in the way. And that's what brought my great-grandfather Josiah into Confederate military service.

His older brother Daniel had already gone to war in 1862, but Josiah was still too young. In the winter of 1864, when he was 15, he was still too young by our standards. But by then, both sides had already recruited boys his age and younger. It was at that time that Josiah's stepfather, Henry Martin, came home briefly. His unit had been raiding through the region, so he took the opportunity to see the family.

Apparently, Josiah's eagerness to join the fight influenced Henry to take the boy with him to the army camp. He was very interested in what he saw of military life, at least until night came. Josiah lay down and pretended to sleep while listening to the soldiers talk about the raids they had made on the farms and towns. They had seized many horses and mules as well as food and other supplies that might have been used to aid the Confederate war effort. As he listened, Josiah grew more alarmed, knowing that planting time was coming soon, that his neighbors, friends and family would need those animals and supplies just to survive.

That's when he made a very difficult decision. When the soldiers were all asleep, he released the horses and mules, hoping they would find their way back to their homes. All but one, that is.

He kept one horse so he could escape the camp and the retribution of his father's angry comrades. Josiah rode that horse all the way to Selma, and that's where he met a Confederate recruiter who enlisted him in the 19th Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry.

Found at Atlanta

Before long, he had joined the Army in Dalton, Georgia, where it awaited William T. Sherman's drive to capture Atlanta. By that time, his mother had heard of his enlistment and had sent word to her husband. Knowing that the spring offensive was imminent, Henry Martin determined to do all he could to rescue his son.

During the long weeks of maneuver and battle from May to July, he searched for Josiah among the Confederate dead, wounded, and prisoners. It seemed impossible that he would ever find him, but he did. Josiah was wounded in battle at Atlanta, shot through the hip, and unable to escape. When Henry found him, he made sure he received medical attention, and then made sure he swore an oath of allegiance to the Union. Then he secured a parole for the boy and sent him back through the lines where a Confederate surgeon tended his wound and sent him home. He was still recovering when the war ended the following spring, and he never walked normally for the rest of his life.

That's Our Land

Josiah's story reminds me of a movie I saw when I was a child. Movies about the Civil War and other conflicts shaped my understanding of the world into which I had been born. In that world, honor, family, community, and service mattered more than the individual. I saw that in the opening scene of "The Undefeated" starring John Wayne as commander of a Union cavalry unit.

The action begins with Wayne's unit attacking and overwhelming a ragged Confederate force. As they consolidate their victory, a messenger rides up with the news that General Lee has surrendered and that the war is over. Wayne orders a flag of truce to be brought so he and two others can carry the news to the retreating enemy. And when they do, the Confederate officer who speaks with them explains that they already knew of Lee's surrender. Wayne is shocked and dismayed to hear this, realizing that these Southern soldiers are not about to surrender. When he asks why, the answer is: because this is our land and you're on it.

That was why my great-grandfather went to war. When pushed to make a hard decision, he chose to go to war to defend that which was precious to him. In one sense, it's a tragedy that a

boy of 15 had to learn such a hard lesson. But in another sense, it was a great blessing. Many people never learn it.

The Legacy Lives On

My grandfather was twice his age when similar circumstances taught him that there are causes much greater than himself and even greater than country. I don't know how much he learned from his father—Garland was only 19 when Josiah died—but I'm sure he knew the story and saw the legacy of it lived out in front of him day after day. He did what he could to pass on the lesson to his children through circumstances that were far more tragic after the war, when he lost his beloved Amy Clyde to pneumonia and was left to raise three young children alone on the eve of the Great Depression.

That required hard choices of a man forever broken. But he knew enough to make those choices. He grieved when my father, Jack McCarne, was drafted into the army in 1943, just as he had been a generation earlier. And he rejoiced when my father came home at the end of World War II. I expect he had the same feelings regarding his daughter Alice, who served as a nurse in the European Theater of Operations and came home as the bride of a handsome young officer.

They too were warriors, doing the best they could to make life better for those around them and those who would come after them. My turn came a generation after that. The examples of my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather inspired me to become a soldier. It's all I wanted when I was a child.

When I entered military service in 1983, it was a dream come true. I didn't have to grow up as fast as my fathers did, but by the time my parents came to visit me in Germany, the thrill of Army life had already faded into the cynical reality of a seasoned veteran. I was not yet a warrior, but something my father said during their visit set me on that path. As we were driving through Munich, he asked me where we were, and when I told him, he said, "The last time I saw Munich was from 10,000 feet, and there wasn't much left standing."

He wasn't joking. I'd heard his stories of his service as a mechanic on a B-24 bomber based in Italy. He knew the human cost of the strategic bombing campaigns against Hitler's Germany, both to the enemy and to his friends and comrades. When he flew over bombed-out Munich in 1945, he didn't have to see the faces of the people on the ground to know what they were feeling or to guess what they were thinking. These are things my father didn't have to say in words. He had already explained it to me by his life. For all his faults, he lived to see his

children and grandchildren live in freedom, and with that freedom, make better choices, even if he couldn't understand or see why our choices differed from his.

What I Carried to War

And this is what I carried when I went to war in Iraq, first in 1991 and again in 2008. I held no animosity toward the Iraqi people. None of us did. We served the United States of America, and we deployed to the Middle East because our oaths of service bound us by our sacred honor to defend our nation. What I began to understand in 1991 was that the Iraqi soldiers facing us had similar reasons for fighting. It may have been fear that brought them into service to President Saddam Hussein, but at heart they were still fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands. Their war was not against us, but against whatever and whomever kept them from fulfilling those roles.

I saw the same motivation in our Arab allies, and it puzzled me. These were not Christians. They served a different God, but they seemed bound by the same kind of honor and selflessness that motivated us. Why then would we want to kill each other? That's a question I asked myself in February 1991, as I watched the endless columns of defeated Iraqi soldiers walking home and viewed the mangled remains of their comrades who weren't so fortunate. It's a question I asked again in 2009 when I looked down on detainees in one of our military confinement centers.

Some of those men were hardened jihadists whose fanatical devotion to Allah was reflected in hate-filled eyes. We might call them terrorists, violent extremists and criminals. I wonder though what their wives and children would call them. They were but a small portion of the detainees in that facility. Most of the detainees had been involved in fighting against our forces, but some simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. What were they thinking? Why did they oppose us when we were only trying to make things better for them?

Well, maybe the answer is the same one John Wayne received. This is our land, and you're on it. Were they faced with hard choices just like my fathers and I had been? Did they take up arms because they didn't want a foreign power to determine their fate? Yes, some did, and I can understand that. It didn't matter that Saddam the tyrant had hurt them and robbed them of freedom, nor did it matter that Iraq might never become a stable, cohesive state. What mattered was that their families, their clans, their tribes were threatened. Whether they cooperated with the Americans or fought against them, their future was in doubt. Not to choose was a choice to let others decide for them and to relinquish their ability to influence the situation. How can I hate them for going through the same decision-making process I did, even though their decision made us enemies for the moment?

Enemies for the Moment

Enemies for the moment. I learned about that in 1996 at an event called "Wings of Valor." This symposium featured four of the world's most highly decorated combat aviators. They had earned their honors fighting against one another in World War II. Russian General Vitaly Popkov was twice a hero of the Soviet Union. German General Günther Rall held the Knight's Cross. American Colonel William Lawley was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. And British Flight Lieutenant Bill Reed received the Victoria Cross.

Fifty years earlier, these men had labored heroically to defend their nations and inflict damage on their enemies. Their exploits are the stuff of legends. Yet in 1996, the world of their legendary exploits was quickly fading away. Three of them had been warriors for the Soviet, Nazi, and British empires, which had ceased to exist. The fourth was a warrior for an American superpower that was losing its way and its identity at the close of the Cold War. And there they were together on a stage in a high school in Alabama, telling old war stories and sharing honor with one another.

The Heart Pain of Time

A warrior understands. We pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor to causes greater than ourselves in hope that they will be enduring causes that help all people live in peace. When we get old, we realize that even the greatest of causes fades eventually and becomes part of the graveyard of history. What's the point of bearing hatred and bitterness when all turns to dust in time? And what's the point of upholding a cause that no longer seems worthy of honor?

This is why old warriors suffer from an incurable heart pain. Change is inevitable, and that means nothing lasts forever, not even the earth and sky. Old warriors spend their last years wondering if the changes they observe have made their sacrifices and suffering obsolete and meaningless. The pain can be excruciatingly magnified if the warriors see that their honor has been manipulated. That happens, perhaps more often than we imagine.

When Honor Becomes a Tool

Honor is an exploitable weakness for the ruthless and unprincipled. They know those who live by a code of honor will be bound to keep their word even to their own hurt. If you wonder why such honor-bound institutions as the German army, for example, could be twisted to serve an evil regime like Hitler's, that's how. Warriors do not, as a rule, seek supreme power. They're

keenly aware of lines of authority and where they stand within those lines. They pledge their loyalty to those they believe will bring the greatest good for the causes they serve. And that often means the nation of which they are citizens by birth or adoption.

As long as the organic laws and protocols of the nation ensure the selection of leaders who look out for the nation's best interests, the warriors have some assurance that their honor-bound pledge of loyalty and obedience will be safeguarded. However, when scoundrels find ways to take power, the warrior's honor becomes nothing more than a tool by which those scoundrels can co-opt the nation's might to serve their own selfish interests. I suppose it could be said that warriors who go along with such a thing cease to be warriors and become mercenaries. Those who oppose this manipulation of power become outcasts and rebels.

In such situations, the honor of all has suffered extreme violence at the hands of unprincipled wickedness. It's a kind of rape that leaves the warrior traumatized, compromised, and forever questioning whether he or she could have made better choices and secured a happier outcome for the cause they served and the people they loved.

Wounds Beyond Combat

Warriors suffer another kind of heart pain that may be a surprise to those who have not experienced it. It comes from wounds inflicted on those who shouldn't be in danger. I learned about this during my second tour of duty in Iraq. My immediate supervisor was a colonel whom I had known as a friend and colleague for a long time. He had asked for me by name, and I was eager to work for him.

About a month after I arrived in Baghdad, he suffered a seizure while he was sitting at his desk. I don't know what caused it, but since it was a seizure, and since he had a neurological condition in his medical history, he was evacuated back to the States. And that's how I became the unlikely director of counterintelligence operations for the Iraqi theater. My tenure was brief. It took about a month to deploy another full colonel to Baghdad to become my new boss. He was the right choice. Not only was he technically proficient and very experienced, he was also the kind of leader who looked after his people.

I saw that when one of our Air Force colleagues had to be evacuated on very short notice. His ex-wife had died suddenly, leaving no one to care for their eight-year-old daughter. And then came the evacuation of one of our Marines. His wife had been sexually assaulted, and he needed to go to her. Next was my turn.

The Year of Loss

It had already been a very hard year for my family. My oldest daughter was in her junior year in high school, and I just happened to be a world away as she navigated that difficult transition from child to adult. Others in her class navigated that same road, but with more trouble and less success. One of them, a girl my daughter knew casually, disappeared one day from school, and she was found a few days later, her lifeless body left in a Baltimore alley. Her death impacted the entire school and my daughter, but not as much as an incident that occurred two months later.

It was February 13th, the eve of Valentine's Day. That holiday isn't as pleasant for my family as it once was. I learned about what happened through an email from our church leadership, and my wife filled in the details as soon as she could. In brief, a man we all knew and loved flew into a fit of rage and shot to death his wife and her two children. That one hurt us all, especially the kids. The girl and boy who died so violently were well-liked in our youth group. Their parents were always there, serving, giving of themselves, making the lives of the whole congregation better with their presence. The medical explanation of what happened involved a chemical imbalance in the man's brain and missed doses of medication that drove him to do something he would never think about in his right mind.

Warriors of the Hearth

That explanation, however accurate, it doesn't touch the pain of hearts ripped open. My wife had to handle this all by herself. Unlike my colleagues, I couldn't be evacuated home. Those precious lives were not my kin, however dear they were to those I loved most. The congregation came together to hold each other up, and that's how my family got through the ordeal. I didn't have a congregation or much of a support group. My grief was mine alone.

But I was close enough to two colleagues to share the news with them. They had noticed, and they cared. They told the boss, and he cared. Of course, he needed a fully functioning deputy to help him run the operation, but he also cared for me as a person. He took part of my burden, offered to help me get counseling, and lighten my duties as much as he could. That's what warriors do, even warriors as scarred and wounded and profane as he.

I saw his wounds over the following weeks. His deployment came at a very bad time for his family. I never got the whole story, but I learned enough to know he was worried and grieved about choices his teenage daughter was making and about the direction his son's life was going. Something also had come between him and his wife. Like me, he couldn't go home and fix it. He

was needed in Iraq. Thus, he threw himself into what he knew best: soldiering in the murky world of intelligence and making sure his people were up to that challenge.

What I learned from that very hard year is that the greatest pain comes not from battlefield wounds, but from having to remain on the battlefield when those who are most important to us suffer the wounds we are supposed to protect them from. We were in Iraq to keep the terrorists away from the homeland. We succeeded in that, or at least it seemed so. Where we failed was in fighting the terror in the hearts of our loved ones, a terror lodged deeply in our own hearts as well. How was I to know that our greatest enemy was inside of us, and that the great cause of American freedom meant nothing if we couldn't overcome the fractures that drove our families into the dust?

That's when I began to realize that my military service and my calling as a warrior would be for nothing unless I was first a warrior for those whom our Creator had put into my hands. This is the worthier cause. This is the greater calling. This is what unites seasoned warriors across time, culture, language, and ideology. We are the guardians of our tribes, clans, and nations. But first, we are guardians of our hearths and homes. Our calling is to pass on to our children and children's children what we know of the important things in life, and teach them by example to navigate the impossible choices life throws at us. We will never succeed completely, but if we're not careful, we can fail completely. Generations of failure bring a society to the point that the warriors can never be sure their precious ones will ever be safe, even in the thoughts of their minds and the imaginations of their hearts.

A Warrior and a Christian

C.S. Lewis had already helped me understand that years before, and years before I would ever be deployed to Iraq. He was still an atheist when a German artillery shell ended his military career and nearly ended his life on the Western Front in 1918. A generation later, as a Christian apologist, he explained to a nation again at war how it was possible to be both a warrior and a Christian. His explanation appears in his book, *Mere Christianity*.

Lewis is writing about something that transcends the boundaries we've set for ourselves in our national, ethnic, cultural, sectarian, and tribal enclaves. The ideas he shares are the produce of a generation that embraced the ideal of Christian nationalism. But it seemed that ideal shattered when the Christian nations tore themselves to pieces. Western civilization with its Christian veneers suffered a mortal wound on Flanders Fields in World War I, and we've never recovered. The Great War and its successors taught us that Judeo-Christian warriors have the capacity to

rise above their Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, communist, and atheist enemies, but they also have the capacity to sink to lower, more savage depths. What, if anything, sets us apart? And if nothing sets us apart, then what redeeming thing might we find that brings us together? This is what Lewis proposes. To love our enemies and to wish their good in this world or the next.

It's ironic, but by this time not surprising, that non-Christian warriors brought this lesson home to me. I assume they were not Christians in the sense that my Baptist upbringing taught me. Although now I realize that they were open to learning more about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had his representatives allowed them to do so in a way that preserved their identity and culture. They were humans made in the Creator's image, just like the rest of us. And they lived by a code of honor that mirrored the righteous standards of our Creator's Torah. I refer to the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors who went to battle against the 7th Cavalry and their commander, George Armstrong Custer, at the Battle of Little Bighorn. More than 1,500 of them overwhelmed Custer's command on June 25, 1876. When it was over, 259 soldiers, half of the regiment, lay dead, alongside 31 native warriors and 10 women and children.

Peace Through Unity

It grieves me to say that it was a battle that should never have been fought and a war that should never have been waged. The more I learn of our history, the more such grief I acquire. The reasons for bygone wars lose their relevance with the passage of time, but the damage is done and the wounds are grievous. We can't change that, but we can stop the hurting from continuing on to the generations after us. How to do that is by loving one another, which is a way to describe honor.

In the American tradition, honor came quickly to the dead of the 7th Cavalry in the form of an imposing granite monument erected atop the hill where Custer and his men made their last stand. Honor for the native warriors came much later, after the nation remembered that there is an obligation to honor all American veterans of all wars, even those Americans who never wore a United States uniform and who never made an oath to the Constitution. Like other American warriors, when asked why they were fighting, they could have said, "Because this is our land, and you're on it."

The Indian memorial at the Little Bighorn National Battlefield is called "Peace Through Unity." It was unveiled on June 25, 2003, 127 years after the battle. Unlike the Seventh Cavalry Monument, the native memorial doesn't dominate the landscape, but is part of it. The memorial is a circle with entrances facing east and west. It's open to the plains on the north side where a

metal sculpture depicts warriors riding away to the battle urged on by their women. The interior stone walls are engraved with stories of the battle from the native perspective, stories that up to now had been largely ignored. Proceeding around the circle, the visitor comes at last to a fourth opening, a window facing to the southeast. There in the center of that opening stands the 7th Cavalry Monument.

The grandeur of the granite monument and the humble earthiness of the Indian memorial couldn't be in greater contrast. But it's in their contrast that the message of peace through unity comes across so clearly. The native memorial was designed purposefully to include such a view of the 7th Cavalry Monument. In true native fashion, honor is perpetually given to all warriors who fell on that battleground. Although enemies in life, they are united in death. The honor given to all by all is the way to heal gaping wounds that have rendered generations fractured, divided, rootless, and empty. These are the heart wounds warriors bear for themselves and their people. These same wounds are the ones that our creator bore on our behalf.

The War That Never Ends

Ultimately, the wars we fight are the same war he fights for us. The war to vanquish the adversary of our souls. Luke's Gospel records a significant action in that war when the adversary came to test Messiah Yeshua. We know the story. How each temptation came with a twist of Scripture designed to manipulate the Messiah's sacred honor. And how Yeshua countered each attempt with Scripture applied correctly. Yeshua won the day and Satan fled the field. And then we read one of the most frightening verses in the Bible, in [Luke 4.13](#), and when the devil had completed every test, he departed from him until another occasion.

He departed until another occasion. That means he didn't consider the war to be over. He still doesn't. From the moment he lost his place in the heavens, the devil has shaken his fist at the Creator and yelled, this is my land and you're on it. He says the same to us. We may defeat him at one point, but he always comes back. Any moment of peace in this conflict is not an end to war, but an armistice, a temporary end to fighting. The fighting always starts up again.

The greatest tragedy in this perpetual conflict is that our adversary advances his cause by getting us to fight each other. He does that by having us attach ourselves to worthy causes. Quite often, they are genuinely worthy. But just as often, the worthy causes clash in the same way my great-grandfather Josiah clashed with his father Henry Martin. The worthy cause for one was to defend his land. The worthy cause for the other was to defend his nation. How would that be resolved in a way that preserved honor and made a way for true peace?

President Abraham Lincoln offered a suggestion in his second inaugural address. Just before the Civil War ended, regarding the Christian halves of a divided nation at war with itself, Lincoln said, "...with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which we may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

That is the worthier cause. That is love in action. That's the way beyond the armistice to a peace that passes understanding. May we have grace to achieve it for the sake of our children and all who come after them. Thank you.

The Altar is Open

If you're here this morning and the Father is speaking and you need prayer, you need to deal with him, there are those on either side that will meet you and are willing to pray with you. If you just need to kneel before the Father, the altar is open. So just hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in this time and surrender. Amen. The altar is where you meet us. Take me there, take me there. What you need is just an offering. It's right here. My life is here and I'll be a living sacrifice for you.

Tried and Purified by Fire

Your fire, the refiner. I want to be consumed. I want to be tried by fire. Purify. Take whatever you desire. Lord, here's my life. I want to be tried by fire. Take whatever you desire. Lord, here's my life. If your glory wants to come, let it fall. We want it all. Your fire is consumed. Fill this place. Set it ablaze. And I'll be a late sacrifice for you. You're a fire, a refiner. I want to be consumed. I want to be tried by fire. Purified. Take whatever you desire. The Lord is my life. I want to be tried by fire. Purified. Take whatever you desire. The Lord is my life. I am purified. I want to burn for you, clean for you, clean my hands, clean my heart. Take my life as a sacrifice. I want to burn holy in you. Purify you. Take my life as a sacrifice. I want to burn for you. I want to burn for you. Only for you. Take my life as a sacrifice. I want to burn for you. You're a fire, a refiner. I want to be consumed. You're a fire, a refiner. I want to be consumed. You're a fire, a refiner. I want to be consumed. I want to be tried and purified. Take whatever you desire. Lord, here's my life. I want to be tried and purified. Take whatever you desire. Burn me beautiful, burn me lovely, burn me righteous, burn me holy. Burn me beautiful, burn me lovely, burn me righteous, burn me holy. Burn me beautiful, burn me lovely, burn me righteous, burn me holy. Brand us with your name. Burn us beautiful. We need you. Burn us lovely. Burn us righteous.

Burn us holy. Try me. Purify me. Take whatever you desire. For here's my love. Let me try. Purify. Take whatever you desire.

We Bless You

Thank you for leading us. Thank you, Father, that it is your righteousness we stand under and not that of our own. Thank you, Father, that as you try us by fire, you're purifying us into your beautiful, holy, set-apart bride. We bless you. We honor you, Father. And we thank you for doing for us what only you can do. In Yeshua's name. Amen.

Let's sing the Shema. Shema Israel Adonai Ukshah Evo Eo. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. Now may the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be like-minded with one another in the manner of Messiah, so that together with one voice, you glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you peace.

Shabbat shalom, family.

Our Mission

Founded in Truth Fellowship exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message has blessed you, or if you see God working in and through this ministry, we invite you to prayerfully consider partnering with us so that the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach all nations.

If you would like to take part in this mission, you can do so at foundedintruth.com/give, or you can scan the QR code on the screen. These offerings go toward providing resources for both our local fellowship as well as our online ministry, but also our many outreach ministries, including our foster care and adoption ministry, local charity outreach ministry, our international online children's ministry, and any future ministries that the Lord would allow us to walk through and walk in to impact the world around us with his love and blessing and the bold proclamation of the gospel of King Yeshua.

We thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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