

“Sacrifice - Once For All”

November 7, 2021
York United Ministries
Worship Service at KCUC
Rev. Andrew K. Lee

Prayer for Illumination

By the power of your Holy Spirit startle us with your Word, O God,
and awaken us to your truth, for Jesus' sake. Amen

Scripture Readings

Hebrew 9:23-28, Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sin

²³ Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

This is word of the witness of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God.

< Time for the Children in All of Us >



Good morning, my friends! On my stole, you can see a red poppy. Today we commemorate Remembrance Sunday. We express our respect and gratitude for the sacrifice of the past wars in the world. Our

grandparents and great-grandparents shed their drops of blood in the unknown fields. We need to memorize and recall their sacrifice for world peace. But whenever we express our gratitude with respect, we sometimes feel inner conflicts. That is, we are Christians who speak out non-violence and peace. Then would it be appropriate to express our gratitude to those who experienced the war on the battlefield? They must have shot enemies during the war. Although they shot enemies, the enemies were still humans, and the veterans may have killed them. This question is one of the questions that I received from the YAYA group members. What do you think? Should we still express our respect and gratitude to those who joined the war?

My answer is yes. Let's take a look at police officers who serve our community. They have their own rules of engagements of guns, and sometimes they are commanded to use their power to keep the peace and safety of the community. Without them, we may have been in danger or threatened by armed gangs or violent bullies. Nobody wants to be exposed to unexpected physical violence on the street, right? That's why public and governmental authority is needed even in developed countries. In other words, although there could have been unnecessary violence in wars, the soldiers' efforts and sacrifice were inevitable, and they took the burdens of their times in order to keep the peace that we are enjoying now.

It is similar to the sacrifice of Jesus. The Israelites believed they needed innocent blood to wash away their sins. But Jesus became the sacrifice, and once for all, his sacrifice was given to the whole world. And his

blood on the cross has made us free from our sin and the sins of the world. The mystery of the sacrifice of Jesus and the redemption would be an ongoing open question in our church life, but one thing is apparent in the Bible. He sacrificed his life for us, and God sent Jesus to the world for the shedding of his blood on the cross. And whoever believes in him would get the gift of eternal life. My friends, Jesus' cross and his sacrifice are for you, and you became the children of God through his sacrifice. Let's express our gratitude for the sacrifice for us. God be with you, my friend!

<Reflection>

Would you please answer me who the names of? Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier, Gordie Howe, and Ron Francis: Who are they? Yes, they are NHL legends in our times. Do you like to play or to watch hockey games? Hockey season is coming, and we know Canadians are such hockey people. Indeed the passion for hockey is proven in times of war. Some of you may remember the Remembrance Day worship service last year. I preached at York Pines United, and I mentioned the Korean War and a battle in Korea. In 1952, Canada had deployed over 26,000 men to defend South Korea, and the battle I mentioned was the Battle of *Kapyung*. The Canadian army of the 2nd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, called 2PPCLI, which is about 700 Canadian soldiers, brutally fought against Chinese troops on Hill 677 in *Kapyung*. And I explained in detail how the Canadian Army 2PPCLI saved a lot of refugees and the Korean Army who had to retrieve through the valley, passing the Hill 677. On April 23 in 1951, the Canadian Armed Forces showed their immense defence ability, and the very next year of winter in 1952, they showed joy in the most stressful situation. Look at this short video:

In the midst of the Korean War, members of PPCLI and the Royal 22e Regiment took to the ice to play hockey. It was on the ice of *Imjin* River. They brought the equipment from Canada: Isn't it amazing? They really



loved hockey, so they brought their sticks along with their rifles. To commemorate their play in the *Imjin* River, they started annual hockey games, called <*Imjin* Hockey Classic>.

Canadians are hockey people, and they didn't lose their peace of mind and their friendship with Koreans and other UN soldiers throughout hockey games. I, as a descendant of the Korean War, appreciate Canadians' sacrifice and service in the war.

And this appreciation is one of the reasons that I joined the Canadian Armed Force. I also again appreciate King City United Church and York United Ministries allowed me to serve God on a different level. My current home unit, as you may know, is the largest Navy reserve unit, called HMCS YORK in downtown Toronto, and it has more than 350 sailors. While I am with them in the unit, I gradually learn they need some time and space to breathe spiritually. I can't tell many things in the unit because it is somewhat classified, but I can say that my presence is not unimportant to give them a breath of fresh air. I believe that is a way to serve God, serve the country, and serve peace.

Remembrance Sunday is such a great chance to reflect on the nature of sacrifice. Whatever elaboration about sacrifice, Christians' supreme sacrifice is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Interestingly today's passage describes the crucifixion of Jesus without a description of emotion or Jesus'

suffering but rather a theological reflection of the cross and his sacrifice. Apostle Paul in Hebrews sees a transition from a repetitive sacrifice of animals on the altar to a one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is believed to become a permanent act of atonement that God intends and accepts. Certainly, when we read what the Apostle Paul writes in Hebrews, the passage includes the epistemology of Platonic Greek perspective, which presupposes the stark contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. The Platonic explanation was needed when the Apostle Paul tried to explain to the Hebrews. And it helps them a lot to understand the true meaning of the blood and the cross of Jesus Christ.

For the Hebrews and the Israelites in the time of Apostle Paul, the sacrifice of Jesus was a groundbreaking change: They didn't have to sacrifice their animals on the altar anymore. In other words, the worship to God became not a release as innocence from the trial by the judge but a celebration of being pre-paid by Jesus Christ. And the tradition of this celebration has succeeded in the worship service even now.

The sacrifice of Jesus frees us from the debts of our sins and opens the door of renewal and redemption; however, we often forget how sinful we've been and how precious Jesus' sacrifice is. While modern theologies have constructed celebrating community and joyful worship, both preachers and worshippers instantly or quickly forget the origin of the joy of celebration. The basis of celebration is the fact that we've been forgiven and accepted by God although we are sinful. I don't want our churches to go back to the old style that emphasizes sin too much. However, we should be in balance between joy and awe towards God. We shouldn't forget the origin of our joy and celebration that stands on the sacrifice of Christ. This is like how we

shouldn't forget the precious sacrifice of the soldiers who took the burdens for the progress of human history.

Sisters and brothers, we shouldn't make Jesus' sacrifice worthless but rather priceless. The Christian community should always be in the tension between joy and awe and between uplifted celebration and sincere gratitude. Then the mystery of the meaning of Jesus' cross will reveal the treasure throughout your life.

Now brothers and sisters, with joy and gratitude, let us ponder the true meaning of the sacrifice of Jesus, the sacrifice of soldiers, and the sacrifice of the people who have silently worked to sustain this community, society and the world.

Let us pray silently.