Welcome all and Online

* Thank Dennis for fixing our Online feed
* Thank Gary and Shannon for Treats
* Thank Barbara and Terrie (Cleaning MPR)

Prayer: Micheal, Liz,

Not Forgetting the Battled

Eph. 6:10-12

5/25/25

It’s been said that Memorial Day Weekend is the “unofficial” kick off to summer. Many have headed out to the lakes to camp. Many will prepare hamburgers and hot dogs and for some they’ll start the journey back from where they “mini vacationed” for the long weekend, but most of us will just enjoy the extra day off work & school.

This morning, I want to break from the normal and share with you the reason this weekend should mean a whole lot more than our just what are plans are. Let us take a moment and reflect on why we celebrate Memorial Day.

Isaiah 46:9(a) says “*Remember your history, your long and rich history...”* The problem is that this generation and others before have forgotten that the freedom we have today, though it comes under fire in some political arenas, was not “free”! Thus, the reason we should always fight for the freedom we have in this great nation!

On this holiday weekend, we are to remember those who fought for their country, our country. We should, not just this weekend, but always honor those who put their lives on the line in order for us to live in a free country. Moment of silence

**I know we have Veterans Day in November, but AT THIS TIME, I WOULD LIKE FOR ALL OF OUR VETERANS and ACTIVE DUTY TO STAND SO THAT WE MIGHT HONOR YOU HERE THIS MORNING.**

I want all of you veterans and those who are serving currently to understand how much I, we, thank you for defending this country and for fighting for our freedoms that we have today! Thank you!

This morning though, I want to speak of a different military; a military that many in this room are a part of if you are a Christian. I’m speaking about the Lord’s Army.

As Christians it’s no secret we are in a daily war...But as our text shows us we are not fighting a physical war, but a spiritual war.

* Eph. 6:10-12

***10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.***

This morning, I would question, “Does our church have any battle casualties?” I’m sure this morning the answer is yes. Church and the Christian life can leave scars, take limbs, and even cost lives...I’d like to share with you four types of casualties that God’s Army is currently experiencing."

**I. Killed In Action**

"Killed in Action" (KIA) is a military term that refers to the death of a service member who is killed during battle or combat. It's a casualty classification used by militaries to distinguish deaths from hostile forces during active combat. This includes deaths from enemy fire, friendly fire, or wounds sustained during combat that lead to death before medical treatment can be provided.

Spiritually speaking today, there unfortunately are many today who have been or are currently "spiritually killed in action". They have experienced a spiritual defeat or setback during spiritual warfare. It's different from physical death and involves losing one's connection with God, facing doubts, or declining in spiritual health, which could be worse than a physical death!

* Luke 8:4-15

*4 One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him: 5 “A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. 6 Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. 8 Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!” When he had said this, he called out, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.” 9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables to teach the others so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: ‘When they look, they won’t really see. When they hear, they won’t understand.’ 11 “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God’s word. 12 The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. 13 The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don’t have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. 14 The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so, they never grow into maturity. 15 And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God’s word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.*

This phrase, KIA Spiritually, while not a literal biblical term, captures the idea that even those actively involved in God's work can experience spiritual setbacks or losses. These could involve

* Loss of relationship with God
* Doubts
* Discouragement
* Or a feeling of distance from God
* Spiritual injury: Experiencing trauma or harm that affects one's spiritual well-being.
* Failure in spiritual warfare. Not being able to overcome temptations or spiritual challenges.

Some potential causes and factors that can contribute to "being spiritually killed in action" include:

* Spiritual apathy or laziness:
  + Neglecting prayer life, Bible study, Not Engaging in Church attendance.
* Ignoring spiritual attacks:
  + Failing to recognize and resist the influence of evil.
* Living a double life:
  + Failing to live consistently in your faith. Playing both sides
* Neglecting spiritual armor:
  + Not using the spiritual tools God provides us protect oneself

Many have promised all allegiance to the great Commander, His Commission and His Kingdom...They’re received and were taught John 3:16...They were on fire for the Lord, working, living for Him, but went out against a well-armed, well-trained enemy who "zapped" them at once. Especially today, people’s faiths are being utterly destroyed, and because of this, they are beyond help...

The enemy has lied to them that God doesn’t love them, isn’t there for them, or worse there’s no hope in trusting Him. This could be attributed to the Army not receiving the Orders correctly. They’re being given a watered-down version of the Orders (Word), with no power, no fire, and they go out into this battle ill-equipped and find themselves beaten so bad, that they DECIDE of their OWN it’s easier to give up and die, then to fight...They are spiritually dead and have no plans of ever coming back.

Today, though we mourn their loss, if we know someone like this, then we need to do our best to bring them back to life in Christ...

**II. Missing In Action...Presumed Dead**

* James 1:21-25

***21****So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.* ***22****But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.****23****For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.****24****You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.****25****But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

"Missing in action, presumed dead" is a status assigned to military personnel who have been reported missing during combat or wartime, but who have not been positively identified as alive, captured, or deceased, yet have been absent for a prolonged period. It's a classification that acknowledges the uncertainty surrounding their fate.

Spiritually speaking, the phrase "Spiritual Missing In Action...Presumed Dead" refers to the concept of those believers who, despite being part of God's army, have fallen away from their faith and are no longer actively engaged in spiritual warfare. They are no longer serving God as they once did, and even "presumed dead" because their spiritual vitality has been diminished or lost.

* Believers who are "spiritually missing in action" are those who have once been active in their faith, but have since become inactive, disengaged, or have drifted away from God.
  + This can be due to various reasons, such as personal struggles, worldly distractions, or a lack of spiritual discipline.
* The term “spiritually presumed dead" highlights the fact that these individuals are no longer actively serving God and are considered spiritually lifeless or inactive. Their spiritual vitality may have been diminished, and they may no longer be participating in the spiritual battles that God's army is engaged in. They aren’t “dead” per say as their, still on the out skirts, but they are only a winds blow away from becoming dead.

We still carry them on the duty roster, but they aren’t truly engaged and may now only show only show up occasionally to church and church functions. If there is spiritual life in them, it is so little that no equipment with which we are supplied can detect it...

**III. Missing In Action...Believed Prisoner**

* Hebrews 6:4-6

*4 For it is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come— 6 and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him up to public shame.*

The concept of "Spiritual Missing In Action, yet a Prisoner” refers to a spiritual state of being caught in a battle against the forces of darkness, where believers are seen as missing in action because they are struggling to fully engage in God's work and are perceived as being imprisoned by these forces. This concept is rooted in our belief of spiritual warfare, where we are engaged in a constant conflict against evil spirits and the forces of darkness through trials, temptations, and sufferings.

Being a "Prisoner in God's Army" implies that one gets trapped or held back by something the enemy wields, preventing them from fulfilling their potential in their faith and service.

Possible interpretations of this would be:

* Loss of Hope and Discouragement:
  + Feeling overwhelmed by life's challenges and doubting God's love and presence.
* Isolation from God and Others:
  + Experiencing a lack of spiritual connection with God and other believers.
* Negative Thinking and Doubt:
  + Being influenced by negative thoughts & doubts about one's faith and ability to serve God.
* Entrapment by Spiritual Forces:
  + Feeling that evil spirits are actively trying to hinder one's spiritual growth and service.

These that fit this category represents those who are seen on the enemy side of the lines... not ours. We believe they are prisoners. They may even identify and surrender with the enemy. They may have "deserted" or have been captured while rendered helpless.

The results are the same... they laid down their arms and ceased to fight... They gave up it makes no difference about their oath of loyalty or convictions now... they cannot help anyone...including themselves as they’ve allowed the enemies tactics and traps to cause them to become imprisoned...IN SO FAR AS THE BATTLE IS CONCERNED, THEY ARE DEAD!

Though we mourn their loss, we can’t allow Satan to isolate our fellow believers and cause them to become trapped in sin or some sort of lie from the pit of hell. We need to ensure we are encouraging and uplifting one another daily if needed to push through and remind them they are FREE!

**IV. Missing In Action**

* 2 Timothy 4:10
* In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul, is writing to Timothy from prison in Rome, and he is expressing sadness and a sense of isolation. He mentions that Demas, a former associate who had been faithful in ministry, but has abandoned him, drawn by a love of the present world..

MIA or Missing in Action refers to members of the armed forces who have not returned from military service and whose whereabouts are unknown. They may have been killed, wounded, captured, or deserted, but their status is not confirmed. If deceased, their remains have not been positively identified

The concept of "Spiritual Missing in Action" in God's army refers to Christians who are not actively engaged in their faith, despite being part of God's "army." This can manifest in various ways, including neglecting spiritual practices, compromising their faith, or failing to live out their calling as followers of Christ.

* We don’t know what became of them.
* They are still on the roster.
* No one has seen them for a long time.
* There has been no report of them from the enemy.
* NO ONE FROM THEIR OWN COMMAND HAS GONE LOOKING FOR THEM.

Here’s the truth, our Commander our Savior, our Jesus, was so concerned about one "missing in action" that He left 99 others in camp and searched for the one ’missing’ until He found him.

* Luke 15:3-7

3 So Jesus told them this story: 4 “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. 6 When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away!

Closing:

Church, truth is, for those who are MIA/Presumed Dead, MIA/Believed Prisoner, MIA, or even KIA, we cannot and will not give up on them. Maybe we haven't heard from them in a while... Well, how about we set aside our own concerns and reach out to them, rather than waiting for them to make the first move? Perhaps they are in one of the situations we've discussed. Maybe they need a call, a text, a visit, or simply a cup of coffee and a listening ear...not just from the Pastor either...from someone else in the ranks? Truth is, that might be all they need to return to the ranks of God's Army and back in the Father's hand and to be healed and when ready...rejoin the battle!

Are you a Spiritual battle casualty this morning? Maybe we’ve even described you this morning and you’re barely with us here or online. If so, please we want to pray with you and for you, but I need every heart, to tune in to this Word...receive this...” God has not left you and is waiting patiently for you to return to His service, completely. Take heart and know that His love and grace are always available to heal and restore you evening beginning this morning...

Let's come together and support each other in our spiritual journey, knowing that we are never alone in God's Army.

Announcements

· No Service Tonight

· Wednesday, 5/28/25 @ 7pm - Wednesday Night Bible Study & All-iN Youth Group

· Thursday @ 7pm (Men 6:30pm to finish movie) - Men & Women Bible Study

· Next Sunday, June 1st / After Service - 2025 Business Meeting

· Next Sunday, June 1st @5pm - PGC Ministries Zoom Meeting

· 4th of July Church Picnic

* Saturday JULY 5TH, @ Nojoqui Falls Park / 11am-3pm
* Sign Up Sheet for sides and desserts next week

Offering

Close in prayer

\*In closing this morning, there is an old hymn that sums this up so well for us as soldiers for the King

1 There's a royal banner given for display

To the soldiers of the King;

As an ensign fair we lift it up today,

While as ransomed ones we sing.

Chorus:

Marching on, marching on,

For Christ count ev'rything but loss!

And to crown Him King,

toil and sing 'Neath the banner of the cross!

2 Though the foe may rage and gather as the flood,

Let the standard be displayed;

And beneath its folds, as soldiers of the Lord,

For the truth be not dismayed!

[Chorus]

3 Over land and sea, wherever man may dwell,

Make the glorious tidings known;

Of the crimson banner now the story tell,

While the Lord shall claim His own!

[Chorus]

4 When the glory dawns 'tis drawing very near--

It is hast'ning day by day;

Then before our King the foe shall disappear,

And the cross the world shall sway!