

A Cross on the side of the road. Flowers surround it. You know what its saying. Someone was in an automobile accident and died. And this is the exact location where their life was snuffed out. Every time a family member or friend drives by this spot, they are reminded of this person and what they meant to them. A cross or large stone in a garden or in front of a home. Usually a memorial to a dog or cat, that was dearly loved. That animal may even be buried beneath that stone or cross. When I was a child, my brother Bruce and I had a pet alligator named Ally. When He died, we put Alli in a coffee can, my brother dug the hole in the back yard, we put the coffee can into the hole, I read from the Bible, and finally, we put a big stone over the grave. The stone was to remind us of the great times we had with Alli. I am sure you have done the same either with pets or human loved ones. At cemeteries, we put stones over gravesites to remind us of special people in our lives. Every time we see that head stone, we are reminded of the person and the life they lived amongst us. This weekend, our focus is mainly on those men and women who have given up their lives in service to our country. These individuals put their life on the line so that we could continue to enjoy the wonderful freedoms we have here in the United States.

There's another day that we are celebrating this weekend, and that day is Trinity Sunday, which is today. I guess you could say that Trinity Sunday is similar to Memorial Day. On Trinity Sunday, we remember that God reveals himself to us in three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 3 persons and yet 1 God. Now remember, the doctrine of the Trinity does not attempt to completely explain God. It only explains to us in a very simple way what God has revealed to us about himself so far. To describe the tip of the iceberg above the water is not to describe the entire iceberg. So we Christians affirm the Trinity, not as a complete explanation of God, but simply as a way of describing the tip of the iceberg - what we know about Him.

The word Trinity is not found in the Bible. It is a word that describes how God reveals himself to us in the Bible. Note when God made humans beings, He said, "Let us make man in our image. Or at the tower of Babel, God said, Let us go down and confuse their language. The Prophet Isaiah saw the Lord on a throne and heard the angels cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy". Note the emphasis on 3, 3 holies. And as you look further into Scripture, you hear references to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This does not mean that there are three Gods. It means that there is one God who has shown himself in three persons, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Kind of like a tree. You have the leaves, the trunk, and the roots, but one tree. Today, we remember the Trinity – a kind of Memorial Day for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The United States didn't just happen, did it. All the things you see that are American – all the different buildings, all the different freedoms – the American lifestyle – it didn't just happen. Our country was set up by other people. Wars had to be fought. Blood had to be shed. And just in case you forget that, there are war memorials that remind you of the price that had to be paid so that you can enjoy everything you see. I have a cousin Erik who lives in Washington D.C. When I visited him some years back, He took me to see the sights of Washington. I remember visiting all those different memorials. The one that sticks out in my mind the most is the Vietnam Memorial – the big wall of names. All those names of soldiers who died on the battlefield. Those memorials are there to keep us from forgetting that our country is here because of what other people did.

The world didn't just happen either. The sky, the sea, the trees, the animals, the

complicated human body – those things didn't just happen. Wouldn't it be dumb to say that our country developed accidentally? And yet, that's what people say when they describe the world. The world happened accidentally – a big explosion – bang- and then there was a puddle of slime, and wouldn't you know it, millions of years later, there were people.

No, God says. God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, created our world in only six days. But how could that be, you ask. And the answer, really, is very simple – God is powerful. God is wise. God can do whatever he wants. If God wants to create the world, complete with adult animals, and trees that look hundreds of years old, and rock formations that look millions of years old – if God wants to do that in only six days, then he will, because he is powerful, and he is wise.

Wouldn't it be nice if God the Father left behind a few memorials, so that we wouldn't forget just how powerful and wise he was? God has left behind a memorial for you, and that memorial is called nature. Look at the beauty of nature – look at all the beautiful variety of birds that gather around a bird feeder. Go snorkeling, and look at the brilliantly colored fish – all of them beautiful in their own way. Listen to a doctor describe how complicated and how ingeniously the human body is designed. These are God's memorials, and they remind you of just how wise and powerful your creator is.

But after God made the world, the world fell into sin. The Devil took over. The people who lived here didn't realize it, but they were slaves to the Devil, and slaves to sin. No one was free to go to heaven. No one was free from being afraid of God. No one was free from the punishments of hell. And so God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, and Jesus, by his perfect life and innocent death, brought us freedom.

On Memorial Day, we remember the sacrifices that have been made on our behalf. Because of those sacrifices, we have freedom. We don't have to worry about someone barging into our house and robbing us or killing us. We don't have to worry about someone telling us that we can't worship God anymore. We don't have to worry about being thrown in jail for no reason. We are free from those sorts of things. But it came at a cost – people had to go to war, and shed their blood, for us. When you go to the theater, and watch a war movie these days, the movies are becoming more and more graphic. Years ago, I watched a couple of movies. One was Saving Private Ryan, the Patriot – those movies show in very graphic detail just how gory it was, how bloody it was, when those soldiers shed their blood so that we could enjoy our American freedoms.

It was very gory, very bloody, when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, shed his blood so that we could enjoy our Christian freedom. Jesus went into battle against Satan and death, and the battlefield was the cross. And there he shed his blood, finally, even dying, making the ultimate sacrifice. But he did this so that you could have freedom.

You see, that sacrifice served as a ransom, and once that ransom was paid, you were freed from all kinds of things. No longer do you have to be afraid of God, because you know that Jesus has paid for your sins. No longer do you have to be afraid to die, because you know that you'll be going to heaven when you die. No longer do you have to be tortured by guilt because of those sins of the past. No longer do you have to live in confusion about how to get to heaven. You are free from all those things. Free to live at peace with God, and at peace with yourself. But that freedom came at a price – the Son of God had to sacrifice himself for you, to shed his blood

for you. And so, on this Trinity Sunday, we remember what the second person of the Trinity did – Jesus Christ, his death on the cross.

When the Allied forces defeated the Germans in WWII, thousands of prisoners were released. Thousands of people were given their freedom. Not one prisoner said, “No, I don’t believe the war is over. I will stay here in this prison until you prove to me that the war is over.”

When Jesus died on the cross, and then rose from the dead, billions of prisoners were freed. According to the Bible, every person in the world, for all time was freed from their guilt, from their fear, from the condemnation of hell. But not everyone believes it. A lot of people say, “That’s too good to be true. I will stay here in my prison of guilt until you prove to me that God really did win the war.” But for you, you do believe. You are like those prisoners of war, who see the allied troops opening the gates. Let’s go, I’m free. Jesus has opened the gates of heaven to you. The war is over – Satan has lost – you are free from your sins, free to be a Christian who is loved and taken care of by God.

Memorial Day also helps us to appreciate our citizenship as Americans. How did you become an American citizen? For most of us, if not all of us, we were born into it. Back in ancient Rome, you could be born a Roman citizen, buy your citizenship, or serve in the army for 25 years and gain it that way. But no one is born a Christian citizen, nor can we buy it, or earn it by serving in the military. So how does it happen?

That’s where the Holy Spirit comes into the picture, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit brings people into the kingdom of God, he turns people into Christians. He brings us into fellowship with God. And he uses the Gospel. For some, the Holy Spirit turns you into a Christian when you hear the Gospel spoken to you. For others, the Holy Spirit turns you into a Christian when the Gospel and water are applied to you – through baptism.

Throughout the year, we have different days that remind us of our citizenship, days that help us to be patriotic – we have Memorial Day. We have the 4th of July, we have Flag Day. Patriotism is a good thing. It’s good to be proud of your country, to appreciate your citizenship and the sacrifices that were made to win your freedom. Is there such a day as a Christian memorial day? A day when you remember God the Father who made you, God the Son who died for you, and God the Holy Spirit who converted you. Is there a Memorial Day for the Triune God?

I believe that we need a day like that. We are human beings, and we are forgetful. How quickly we forget about our Creator, our Savior, our Sanctifier – we forget what God has done for us. And so, I propose that we have such a day – a Memorial Day for God. Every Sunday, at Open Bible is Memorial Day. We remember what God has done for us. We find joy and strength as we hear the Word of God. That will be our purpose as a church – to be a memorial to God, a place that doesn’t let you forget about what God has done for you. May God bless you this weekend as you celebrate Memorial Day. May God also bless you every Sunday, as you come here to be reminded of your God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.