

Stewards of Time

Memorial Day – May 26, 2019

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-17

When I was a child, Memorial Day was a time to clean the garage and get ready for summer's activities: picnics, bike riding, yard work, etc. I hardly ever thought about history with its wars and fallen heroes. Perhaps a generation who suffered so many things from World War I & II wanted to put it behind and forget the horrors of war. Perhaps prosperity was just eroding the memories of many. Perhaps new problems just pushed the past into a corner, to collect dust. Two old slogans haunt us.

- One thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history,
- If we do not learn from history, we are bound to repeat it.

Our Scripture reading is reflective of times and seasons that appear in life repeatedly.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 encourages us that there is purpose and meaning to life, when we remember God. History is **His Story**. See **Ecclesiastes 3:2-8**.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-11 warns us that the profitability of our earthly labors tends to be temporary in nature. There is a bigger picture of God's eternal purposes that we do not naturally understand.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-14 points out that it is good to enjoy the temporary earthly benefits of our labors, but the bigger eternal purposes God should humble us and cause us to turn to Him.

Ecclesiastes 3:15-17 tells us that God wants us to learn from the past and prepare ourselves for His judgement in the future. See Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

God created man to be stewards over His creation (Genesis 1:28). When God, who is eternal, began creating, the first thing He established was time (Genesis 1:1). We often think of how we can better manage the present and prepare for the future (Psalm 90:12; James 4:13-15). However, we must also be **good stewards of the past** – to humbly learn and establish the right values in our life; to also teach the next generation and preserve the values which we have learned.

Moses instructed Israel to pay attention to their heritage and commit themselves to God who had blessed them. They were to pass their heritage on to their children and grandchildren. The younger generation were to consult their elders about their history / legacy. See Deuteronomy 4:9; 32:7.

To be Stewards of time-past, we have four things to do:

- Remember what has happened and reflect upon it, causing others to understand.
- Rejoice in God's blessings and give thanks to Him for grace and mercy.
- Repent of the sins and failures that have brought evil into the world – personally & corporately
- Redeem the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). Break the bad patterns of the past.

Some things to ponder as we think of America's History / Legacy

How many people laid down their lives for their friends, so that we could enjoy our freedoms?

What are those freedoms? How do we differ from other nations who have less freedoms?

What have we done to preserve our nation's history / legacy?

Do we use our nation's holidays for the purpose for which they were established?

What are some of the great things this nation has done?

What are the short comings of our nation's past?

What is the difference between patriotism and the pride of national superiority?

Do I ever consider how others in the world see my country?

Do I ever consider what God thinks of my country?

Am I grateful to God for my country?

As a Christian, how should I serve my country?