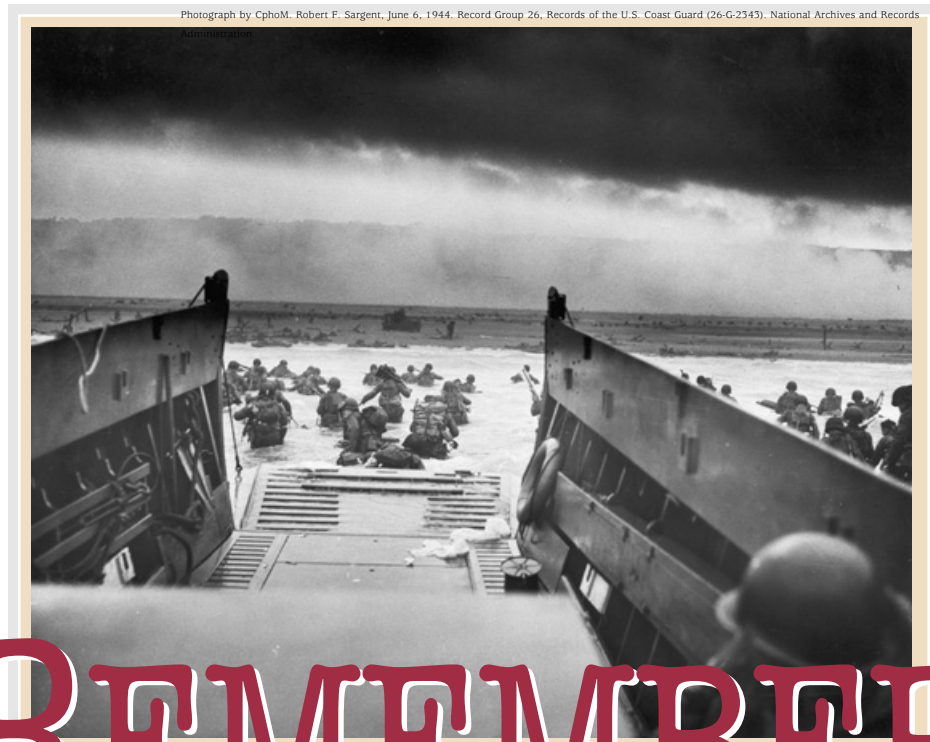


And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Luke 22:19



REMEMBER

Aspects

Issue 140

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Encouraging
believers to know
God and His ways,
and to enjoy a more
intimate communion
with Him

THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS DID NOT INFLUENCE GOD TO LOVE US, DID NOT INCREASE THAT LOVE BY ONE DEGREE, DID NOT OPEN ANY FOUNT OF GRACE OR MERCY IN HIS HEART. HE HAD LOVED US FROM OLD ETERNITY, AND NEEDED NOTHING TO STIMULATE THAT LOVE. THE CROSS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR GOD'S LOVE; RATHER IT WAS HIS LOVE WHICH CONCEIVED THE CROSS AS THE ONE METHOD BY WHICH WE COULD BE SAVED. (A. W. TOZER)

*Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend;
Life and health and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend.*

*Truly blessed is this station,
Low before His Cross to lie;
While I see divine compassion
Beaming in His languid eye.*

*Love and grief my heart dividing,
With my tears His feet I'll bathe;
Constant still in faith abiding,
Life deriving from His death.*

*For Thy sorrows we adore Thee—
For the griefs that wrought our peace—
Gracious Saviour! we implore Thee,
In our hearts Thy love increase.*

(Walter Shirley, et al)

D-DAY

Earlier this month was the fifty-eighth anniversary of D-Day—the Allied invasion on June 6, 1944, which was the beginning of the end for the Axis control of Europe during World War II.

It is a disappointing paradox that we wage war so as to live in peace, but living in peace reduces us to spoiled brats without an appreciation for what that peace cost. A cold, frustrated feeling of disgust invariably rises in me whenever I am confronted with the level of snotty indifference with which most people—and especially the young—regard the tortured history that produced the relative ease of our lives today.

Today there are American, British, and Canadian sons and daughters who never knew their dad because of the sacrifice he made on a beach of Normandy. He died an ugly, horrible death to stop the conquest of a madman. But ask a son or daughter of Poland, or France, or England if the price of those brave soldiers and sailors was worth the life they have now.

Imagine a world in which Adolf Hitler and his Third Reich had been ultimately victorious. Just lean back and think about it for a moment. Now, imagine a world to which Christ had never come, a world in which He had never been nailed to a cross. Just lean back and think about it for a moment, and let the full impact of that consequence shudder through your frame.

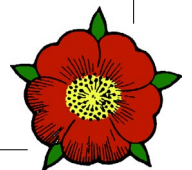
We are a people who live in peace—peace with God—because Jesus Christ voluntarily made the ultimate, horrible sacrifice for our lives. Today most people—even some who call themselves Christians—take for granted that peace, claiming it almost as a right. But it came at an

awful price; it cost one Man dearly. It cost Him alienation from His Father, the ridicule and abuse of His beloved creation, the torture and hideous shame of public execution. Jesus gave His life—not for Himself, but for others.

And during His final moments on this earth Jesus asked that we not forget what He was about to do. He asked that the image and meaning of His cross never leave us, that we not treat lightly the sacrifice He made for us.

So as I think back on the price paid by those soldiers and sailors on that dark, but ultimately victorious day back in 1944, I will be grateful to them for my life of liberty. And at the same time I will express praise to my Lord and Savior for the inexpressible price He paid on that dark, but ultimately victorious day so that I would know peace.

He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But He was pierced through for our
transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him. Isaiah 53:3-6





*Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.*

*Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!*

(Bernard of Clairvaux)

The Evidence for His Life

Boxes filled with old papers and faded black-and-white photographs, bureau drawers crammed with yellowed and torn memories, dog-eared paperbacks, cherished bits and pieces of events well-lived. Collect together the scattered evidence and you have the portrait of a life.

What remains at or near the end of each life is the collected evidence of what that life accomplished, what it was, how it affected the lives of others. Closets bulging with tattered memories since forgotten tell the tale of the one who placed them there so long ago. Letters penned in ink long since faded, annotated snapshots stuffed into albums, childhood mementos pasted together, broken and torn—all comprise the journal of a person's life.

It is inevitable that we will leave something behind, so it is also inevitable that those remaining will be left with the evidence for our life. No life leaves behind a vacuum; everyone leaves a trail.

"...do this in remembrance of Me."

Easter is when we remember a life well-spent, a life that has, in one way or another, affected virtually every life that has followed. Every Easter, possibly more than at any other time of the year, is when we open the cluttered closets of

our memories and sift through the evidence for our salvation through Jesus Christ. From Thursday through Sunday morning, as if representing a compressed version of His entire life, we open the album containing His humility, His anguish, His sacrifice and ultimate victory over the grave.

Jesus left behind the evidence for His life in the lives of those who carried on His mission, and in the words penned by His biographers. He left behind the evidence for His life in the memories of all those who gazed upon His tortured body left hanging upon the cross, and in the joy felt by those who discovered His empty tomb.

And Jesus has left behind the evidence for His life in the heart of everyone who believes in His name.

To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
Acts 1:3,9

We will not forget.



When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:30-32

Dear Lord God, first let me sup with Him, inhaling the sweetness of His words, absorbing the strength of His character, the power of His presence. Then, once He has gone, let all of what Jesus was burn forever in my breast—a flame ignited by His life, and sustained by the Spirit.

*O Love, Thou bottomless abyss,
My sins are swallowed up in Thee!
Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me,
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.*

*Though waves and storms go o'er my head,
Though strength, and health, and friends be gone,
Though joys be withered all and dead,
Though every comfort be withdrawn,
On this my steadfast soul relies—
Father, Thy mercy never dies.*

(Johann Andreas Rothe)



Father's Day

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Romans 8:32

Sunday a few weeks ago was Father's Day, and though my dad has now been gone for more than twenty years, my thoughts still went back to him on the occasion.

If there is a perfect dad out there somewhere, mine was not he. Dad didn't always express himself well, and his lack of schooling could sometimes pop out in curious ways. There are moments of companionship with him that stand out in my memory for their rarity. I can recall only one time that he played catch with me—this as a warm-up for my pitching in the Little League All-star game. And an afternoon spent alone with him and my new transistor radio at a nearby quarry stands out in my memory since such intimate moments so seldom occurred.

Often these moments were missed not because Dad was unfeeling or uncaring, but that he was busy elsewhere, working hard to support his family. From the perspective of a young boy in his formative years, Dad could be neglectful in certain areas, and a little stingy in the area of spending on neat things for his kids. But from the perspective of his son who is now the same age as he during those growing years, I can see

that instead of always doing what we wanted in the short term, Dad was always doing what was good for us in the long term. His love was expressed in doing whatever was necessary for the well-being of his family.

My heavenly Father does not always do for me what I want in the short term. My wishes and wants multiply like rabbits, but are as ephemeral and fleeting as the passing wind. They are invariably selfish and short-sighted, and only on rare occasions for my eternal good.

God the Father is not so much interested in my daily comfort as my eternal good. My doing without more often teaches me how to love more deeply what I already have. And in place of having Him always in attendance, physically by my side, I have, instead, the deeper Spiritual union which has come from His ultimate, painful sacrifice on my behalf.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:33-34, 38-39



WHY, PAUL, SATAN WILL BRING THUNDERING ACCUSATIONS AGAINST YOU. ARE YOU NOT AFRAID?
"NO," SAYS HE, "I CAN STOP HIS MOUTH WITH THIS CRY: 'IT IS CHRIST THAT DIED!' THAT WILL MAKE HIM TREMBLE, FOR HE CRUSHED THE SERPENT'S HEAD IN THAT VICTORIOUS HOUR. AND I CAN SHUT HIS MOUTH AGAIN: 'YEA, RATHER, THAT IS RISEN AGAIN,' FOR HE TOOK HIM CAPTIVE ON THAT DAY. AND I WILL ADD, 'WHO SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.' I CAN FOIL HIM WITH THAT, FOR HE SITS THERE TO JUDGE HIM AND TO CONDEMN HIM FOREVER. ONCE MORE I WILL APPEAL TO HIS ADVOCACY: 'WHO MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US.' I CAN STOP HIS ACCUSATION WITH THE PERPETUAL CARE OF JESUS FOR HIS PEOPLE." (CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON)

The Ubiquitous Cross

“This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.” Acts 2:23 niv

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another.

My heart faints within me!”
Job 19:25-27

Monks hang it from their belts. Protestants hang it in their sanctuaries, and Catholics hang it, complete with the image of the dying Christ, in their living rooms. Sunday School girls and gangster molls hang it from a gold chain around their neck. It sits atop church steeple and tombstone, hangs in the window of the Five-and-Dime, and is painted in glorious Technicolor across the covers of greeting cards. The high school girl wears it as a charm on her bracelet, the professional wrestler has it dangling from a pierced ear, and the prostitute wears it as a decoration about her neck.

So the modern representation of the instrument of Christ’s death becomes a meaningless trinket.

The cross on which Jesus died bore little resemblance to the polished gold caricatures of today. It was an ugly, splintered framework of blood-encrusted wood—no doubt still stinking from the death of its previous victim. The utilitarian framework was most certainly not in the familiar shape hanging behind choir lofts, but a low, mean perch just high enough to keep the condemned off the ground.

It was an ugly death, by design, and meant to drag on for days of suffocating agony as the victim struggled to flex his contorted legs, to push himself higher in an effort to force breath into his tortured lungs. For you see, without in-

tervention, the condemned would slowly die from exposure and blood loss, but mostly from asphyxiation, as the lungs slowly filled with fluid.

Hang that around your neck and wear it to the tea party.

Perhaps we have memorialized the wrong thing. Christ’s death was indeed a sacrifice that should be remembered—but with sober reverence, not as a decorative article of jewelry. We don’t worship a dead criminal; we worship a risen Lord! We don’t hang a tombstone about our neck; why should we decorate ourselves with the instrument of His agony?

Perhaps we should decorate ourselves, instead, with the sign of His *victory* over that death. Any common criminal could have died on a cross, but it took God to walk out of the tomb. Perhaps instead of a gold-plated cross, those wishing to adorn themselves with something that reminds them of Christ should hang from their necks a crude stone or wooden “O”—the picture of the open tomb and the reviving, ever-budding life we have as a result—and a steady reminder that we serve a risen Lord who sits even now upon His throne in glory.

“But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” Acts 2:24 niv

OUR LORD’S CROSS IS THE GATEWAY INTO HIS LIFE. HIS RESURRECTION MEANS THAT HE HAS THE POWER TO CONVEY HIS LIFE TO ME. WHEN I WAS BORN AGAIN, I RECEIVED THE VERY LIFE OF THE RISEN LORD FROM JESUS HIMSELF. (OSWALD CHAMBERS)

*I serve a risen Savior, He’s in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He’s always near.*

*In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And tho’ my heart grows weary, I never will despair;
I know that He is leading thro’ all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.*

*Rejoice, Rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The hope of all who seek Him, the help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind.*

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

(Alfred H. Ackley)





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