

Sermon: May 25, 2008
“A day of memories & reflection”

Riding down the road yesterday ... in my pick-up truck ... filling up at \$4.19 per gallon ...
thinking about what Memorial Day means ...
I'm reflecting ----- life seems so “dis-jointed” to me.
It's probably always has been ... but ... it seems more than ever ----
we all go our separate ways ...

I remember Memorial Day when I was younger.
It began with the annual little league parade through downtown Glen Ellyn.
Then we gathered at the local cemetery ... veterans and flags and rifles and music --- honoring those who
have “gone before” ...
My grandpa always called Memorial Day “Decoration Day” ... so then it was off to another cemetery --- to
plant flowers on the graves of our family. And last ----- a barbeque in the backyard, with family gathered.

I know in our “humble family” ... well, our kids are scattered all over.
They won't be in our backyard ... they will be working and moving and doing what they need to do.
But ... on this Memorial Day ... they will be exactly where they belong:
DEEP INSIDE THE HEART OF EVERY STEP JUDE AND I TAKE!!

In a way --- Memorial Day draws me to what is important in life.
As I look at our flags waving out front and out back ...
As I see all the names of our service men and women listed in the bulletin ...
I look at our flowers ---- a couple celebrating 25 years of marriage ... a lady looking back at being
cancer-free for 5 years ...
I think of how paying \$4 plus for gas is beginning to affect the ways we spend our money and use our time ...
I walk though a veteran's hospital ... see young men and women without limbs, in wheelchairs and walkers ...
their lives forever changed ... and I say to myself ----
*These people who have fought for our country and paid a steep price ...
let them never come home and have to FIGHT for the medical benefits they so richly deserve ...
they need and have earned the VERY BEST WE HAVE TO OFFER!!*

I look at the farmer's field. Just two weeks ago they are battling the wind and rain ---- trying to catch-up on
planting their crops. And today? ---- the corn is already poking its green head above the soil!@!!
Farmers are soldiers: they battle the elements ... and everyday we taste the fruits of their labors.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT AMERICA??

Yes, we are free: free to live, free to disagree.
Free to love. Free to hate.
Free to be black or white or brown or red.
Free to be Lutheran or Catholic or Jewish or Hindu.
We can worship in a temple ... in a mosque ... in a humble room like this ...
on the golf course or in a tree-fort ...
We are free to be attacked ... we are free to fight back.

We are such a diverse place ----- the incredible extremes of wealth and poverty ...
the colors we are ... the stuff we do to make money ...
crowded cities, tall buildings, beautiful parks ...
neighborhoods where gun-fire and violence are a way of life ...
mountains & streams ... humble farm-houses & mansions ... churches seating 10,000 people ... and places
like this where 100+ is a gift.

So ... where do you fit in? What part do you play in this land of ours?
Do you feel like you make a difference? ... do you feel like you count and matter for something??

This is what's so "kool" about believing in Jesus.

Jesus ---- he's so real ... so human.

He speaks the truth about life and God ... about what's important and what's not.

He sees the richness & the diversity & the beauty of the human spirit in places where so-called
"religious types" do not.

He looks into your heart.

He looks into your soul.

And he lets us know ----- YOUR HUMANITY is never defined by the church you attend, by how much
you have or don't have ... by being in 1st place or last place ... by your room number in a nursing home.

Your humanity is defined ... always ... by the CONTENT OF YOUR CHARACTER.

Do you love ---- everyday? Do you share? Do you care? Do you give ... right here, right now??

Today is about our service men and women ... our veterans ... our flag, country, and spirit.

You-all have a story.

I went to a small Lutheran college in Ohio ... then to seminary in Chicago. Vietnam ... war ... protests ...
lots of un-rest. I was never drafted ... but many my age were. I've always felt a bit "guilty" about this ...

why didn't I go ... why wasn't my "number" called?

My cousin John? ----- graduated from the Air Force Academy. He was a fighter pilot in Vietnam. I
remember when his family was notified that he and his plane were shot down.

After a while ---- he was "missing in action."

His wife Myrna ----- never lost faith or focus. Whenever she sent a note or card ... it was always
signed "John and Myrna." Then came the word ---- he's a prisoner of war.

John spent 7 years as a POW ... returned in 1973 ... into the arms of his wife and his 7-year-old daughter
whom he had never met.

His faith in our country never wavered. He retired years later as a decorated General.

Yes, every soldier has a story ... every soldier has a journey ... every soldier
has a reason ... every soldier has a season.

There is a "soldier" inside each one of us.

We march ... we often have to battle.

Sometimes we win. Sometimes we lose. Such is life.

We may not always feel free ... but we are ---- in the very depths of our being.

Today: thank-you, service men and women.

Thanks, too ... to a humble carpenter ... who teaches us --- each day --- how to walk.

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

May 25, 2008

www.allsaintsjoy.com

allsaintsjoyh@sbcglobal.net

708-448-2939