

Sunday: Remembering with Hope
By Bob Young

[The abbreviated Sunday posts which appear on my blog and Facebook page are shortened versions of Bible classes and sermons. The website posts provide more detail and a basic outline of the studies.]

Memorial Day weekend. When I was involved in full-time preaching, on Memorial Day weekend I tried to say something significant about remembering, sacrifice, and love.

For many in today's culture, Memorial Day has lost its meaning. It is too little about remembering and memorials. It is too much about the first long weekend of summer and going to the lake or the mountains for recreation.

When I was in high school, Memorial Day meant that members of the high school band were expected to march in the Memorial Day parade even though school had been out a week or more. (We knew about "community service" before the phrase was coined.) Memorial Day, the parade, the march to the cemetery, "taps," the prayers and addresses – these seemed a bit somber to a teenager. Someone had made a sacrifice for me, and I would get a Selective Service number when I turned 18. I remember helping sell Memorial Day poppies to benefit the local V.F.W. Memorial Day was about remembering, with gratitude.

Remembering is a source of hope. If we cannot see reason for hope, we will not be interested in thinking about the past, the present, or the future. Spiritually, hope is renewed in thinking about the past, especially about the actions and work of God. That truth is reflected often in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms. "We will remember and praise your mighty works and your deliverance." Hope is sustained in careful thought about the future.

In remembering, hope for the future is made certain. The things seen in the past and present secure the unseen future. In this way, hope and faith connect. Faith has as its foundation hope. Faith is being convinced about the promises of God for the future. Faith is conviction about things invisible and unseen. Things seen guarantee things not seen.

Dear Father, may we worship today with gladness, yet with seriousness. As we remember the past, may we be especially grateful for the sacrifice of Jesus which gives us hope for tomorrow and forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.