

Bringing Bread and Cheese

Joe Slater

Wouldn't you just love to do some great thing for God – some spectacular deed that people would remember and be discussing hundreds of years from now? Think of David, who faced the Philistine giant Goliath with a sling and five stones (1 Samuel 17). And he won! How did this come about?

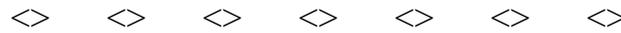
While his brothers were with King Saul fighting the Philistines, David was home tending his aged father Jesse's sheep. Not a very glamorous job, you might say. David had been anointed to succeed Saul as king (see 1 Samuel 16:13). He had proven himself on the field of battle (16:18). And he had served as the king's personal musician (16:23). Yet here he was herding sheep!

David's next assignment wasn't terribly exciting either. Jesse sent him to check on his brother. He brought them ten loaves of bread, plus a gift of ten cheeses for their commander. Well, let's see: messenger and delivery boy – those jobs will make you about as famous as herding sheep!

Fortunately, David humbly and faithfully fulfilled his tasks. Consequently, he was in a position to accomplish something magnificent when the opportunity arose. While David was delivering the food and visiting his brothers, Goliath bellowed the same blasphemous challenge to Israel that he had been thundering for forty days. As the others cowered in fear, David volunteered to fight the pagan champion. He had learned to trust God while defending his father's flock from predators. Now his humble obedience to his father had put him in the right place at the right time for God to use him to give Israel a tremendous victory.

You and I may never be famous. That really doesn't matter. Faithfulness, not fame, should be our goal. Still, David's experience teaches us to do our job, whatever it might be, and to do it well. Much of the success of any army depends upon those who work away from the front lines – people in communications, supply, etc. Likewise, the success of the Lord's spiritual army, the church, involves much behind-the-scenes work that often goes unrecognized.

While performing those necessary tasks, you may even receive some unjustified criticism (David did, see 1 Samuel 17:28). Regardless, keep doing your job. Look for opportunities to do even more for the Lord. And when those opportunities arise, trust God to work through you.



If You Had Died for the Sins of the World How Would You Feel . . .

When people took your name in vain? When people damaged their bodies dabbling in sin instead of glorifying you as their savior in their bodies? When people fussed and got angry among themselves in which you had established and thus brought reproach upon you? When people chose to go somewhere else on the day which you had set aside for men to worship you? When people refused to obey what you said they had to do to gain the benefit of your death? When people did not appreciate your sacrifice enough to stay for the supper you had left as a memorial of it? When people did not respect you enough to wear your name? When people did not care whether their conduct caused anyone else to stumble? Did you ever stop to think? The Son of God probably would think the same as you would about such thoughtless people.

Author unknown (via Bulletin Gold)

Memorial Observances

Joe Slater

I recommend that you attend a Memorial Day service at the military section of a cemetery Monday, especially if you haven't done so recently. The grave markers, speeches, and music will remind you that freedom isn't free. Untold thousands have paid with their very lives. Unfortunately, Memorial Day has become just another day off for most Americans. Camping, cook-outs, ball games, and other recreation have crowded out the original purpose. We are the poorer for our selfish neglect.

Memorial Day is a national holiday, not a religious one. As Christians, however, we observe another memorial day. It is, of course, the first day of each week when we partake of the Lord's Supper in memory of Jesus' body and blood. *“Do this in remembrance of Me”* (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25).

This memorial reminds us that our liberty in Christ is not free. Jesus gave His life on Calvary, shedding His blood *“for the remission of sins”* (Matthew 26:28). In one sense, spiritual freedom costs us nothing – in no way do we earn pay for it. However, in another sense, it costs us everything. We sing, *“All to Jesus I surrender.”* Do we mean it? Jesus said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24).

Sadly, the first day of the week is treated by most people, including far too many in the church, as just another day off. A thousand and one activities compete for the precious little time available. We act like we've done God a favor if we actually make it to church for an hour or two. We are the poorer for our selfish neglect.

Let us be thankful for our freedom, both civil and spiritual. And let us demonstrate that gratitude in thoughtful remembrance!