



New Beginnings, Volume 27, 2008
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John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

General William Tecumseh Sherman, the famous Civil War General, was credited with saying, “War is Hell!” Tradition has it that this was part of the message that he conveyed to the Mayor of Atlanta while on his famous “March to the Sea”. He wanted to leave no doubt in the mayor’s mind that if the City of Atlanta did not surrender to his forces he would burn it to the ground.

I agree with General Sherman. War certainly is Hell to those who are caught up in it. It matters little whether you are a soldier or a civilian, you can be a casualty of the violence that war brings. I am not a judge of what is a “just” war and what is not. In the end, if you are combatant your job is to do the mission you were sent to do. The politicians and civilians will argue over the merits of any war and have so since the very first conflict. But it is the soldier that must face the “Hell” of war. It is for the soldier to be willing to make the sacrifice for the sake of the mission.

In the last four plus years our country has been engaged in a war in Iraq. The original enemy was soon vanquished but America came to realize that the army of Saddam Hussein was never the real threat. The real threat was and is Islamic terrorists that kill and maim both the soldier and the civilian. Never has a war been so politicized and so one-sided reported in our history. For many years the sacrifice and patriotic service of our young men and

women in the military have been unreported or sullied because political agendas were more important than the support of these brave warriors.

The 4th of July is a time when we recognize our freedom. Our freedom was bought by the blood of brave soldiers in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and ultimately the Civil War that united us as one country. Stories of heroism are still read about from these conflicts but few are the stories of bravery and sacrifice that are shared with us at home from Iraq. Yet the truth is brave men and women everyday put themselves in harms way not for foreign oil, not for foreign lands to occupy but so that a people subjected to unspeakable cruelty might experience freedom and self determination. Our kids bleed and die that others may live. How do we as Americans acknowledge their sacrifice and support their commitment?

Jesus talks about love and the sacrifice real love requires. Jesus himself was willing to lay his life down not only for his disciples and his friends but for every human who has ever lived or will live before he returns. His love, given to glorify God, is unconditional and eternal. There is no greater love than that.

As we look to a future that is desperately in need of hope, let us pledge our hearts and souls to a new beginning in Christ Jesus.