

“We loved America so dearly; we were ready to die for her” (John Lewis)

Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. They believed in the cause of freedom and were willing to risk their lives to protect our country. We tend to celebrate Memorial Day as the beginning of summer with beach and lake trips, barbecues, and pool time. Let us not forget: we enjoy the good life because of the ultimate sacrifice and commitment of the people who served.

Today I would like to focus on the sacrifice and the July 2020 passing of US Congressman John Lewis. What struck me about Lewis was the following quote. He said, “**We loved America so dearly, we were ready to die for her.**”



Lewis stood up for what he believed in, and he loved this country. He was among the organizers of what was intended as a 1965 peaceful march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Lewis was advocating for all people to have the right to vote. He was considered one of the Big Six of the Civil Rights Movement. The '60s were tumultuous times, and Lewis was a dedicated advocate for non-violent protests to evolve positive change. Unfortunately, the march across the Pettus Bridge ended up in what was labeled “Bloody Sunday.” Lewis suffered a fractured skull and other injuries, but the result was the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Sacrifice has its costs but leads to positive change. Lewis was a man of faith who stood up for the importance of all God’s people. The Bible says, *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.* (Joshua 1:9)

John Lewis earned a BA degree in Religion and Philosophy and is a graduate of the American Baptist Theological Seminary. What he did and how he did it was consistent with his faith. *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends* (John 15:13).

John Lewis dedicated his life to protecting human rights, securing civil liberties, and building what he calls “The Beloved Community” in America. “I gave a little blood on that bridge,” he said years later. “I thought I was going to die. I thought I saw death.” His dedication to the highest ethical standards and moral principles has won him the admiration of many of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the United States Congress.

Our world has been changed for the better by people who peacefully stood up for what is right, even in the face of physical harm. John Lewis loved our country so much that he was willing to die for it. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, suffered and died because of His beliefs and quest for freedom. Jesus died for our sins because of His love for all humanity. Jesus stood up for what was right despite the opposition.



This Memorial Day, let us remember those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom as a nation. Let us also remember those who sacrificed for the freedoms of our faith.

The Bible Says: *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants* (Psalm 116:15)

Question: Are you willing to stand up for what is right, according to your faith?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We are grateful for the willing sacrifice that Jesus made for our salvation and the sacrifice of many people for the freedoms we enjoy in this world. Amen.