



Spirit Inspired
Worship



Remembering
May 31, 2023
Rachel Yates

Over the Memorial Day weekend, I traveled to Oregon for my nephew's college graduation. Although our road trip had this specific focus, we didn't miss the significance of Memorial Day itself. It hit home in unique ways this year. In the one-traffic-light town where we stayed, American flags lined the main street in all directions. While we ate breakfast at the corner market, I invited my grandchildren to count every flag. We talked about why there are fifty stars. I tried to explain the concept of sacrifice for one's country. I'm not sure they caught it, but they will if they learn it over and over.

We took time to visit the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum. It is home to the Spruce Goose, the largest wooden plane and largest propeller plane ever built, with a wingspan of more than 320 feet. Howard Hughes designed and built the plane during World War II, when German submarines were sinking hundreds of Allied ships. To aid the transport of troops and materials across the Atlantic Ocean, the Hughes Flying Boat was constructed of wood due to the government's restrictions on materials critical to the war effort, such as steel and aluminum. It flew only once, on November 2, 1947. Now it sits in a monstrous hangar, next to 165 airplanes and exhibits. Fighter jets and military helicopters are on display inside and outside, scarred by battles fought by the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marines. The building next door is devoted to space travel, now incorporating our newest military branch, Space Force.

As I inspected the cockpits of the jets, I was dazzled by the array of knobs, buttons, and signal lights (my uninformed description of those controls). What struck me harder, however, was the singular purpose that each pilot must have carried on board to protect this country, at the risk of their own. I'm not a veteran, but I've depended on our service personnel to keep that security. Their sacrifice has changed my life.

As I looked at the cramped space capsule with the torched underbelly, I tried to imagine the mindset of the earliest astronauts, who splashed down in the ocean after each harrowing mission. Though their purpose was exploration, they understood personal sacrifice as well.

The sacrifices of these personnel are not only on display and memorialized in a museum, they are lived out every day by active personnel. It is good to pause – hopefully more than once per year – to acknowledge those who serve our country. We give thanks to God, not for war, but for those who seek to preserve the peace.

We know that no war has ever been able to bring permanent peace. Temporary peace, yes...until the next conflict. That is the way of human nature. The only way the cycle will be disrupted is through God's hands in the lasting peace of the Kingdom. I yearn for the day when everyone will lay down their weapons. Micah 4 speaks of peace and security through obedience:

In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's temple ... (cont.)



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shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it,

and many nations shall come and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between many peoples
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more;

but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid,
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

May it be so.