**FREEDOM**

It is Memorial Day as I write this, making me remember all the people who have died to give us our freedom. This great country has many cemeteries all over the world, some with many thousands of our soldiers buried there. Nearly a million of our men were killed in World War II alone. We remember these fallen warrior heroes.

But there were many other heroes that are usually left unsung on Memorial Day, men like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and George Washington. Nearly all the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were hunted down and killed. Most of them had their fortunes destroyed and their homes burned down. They paid with their lives because of their desire to establish a nation where people can be free. Others later on, like Abraham Lincoln, who gave his life to keep this country unified. So many people have paid the supreme price for our freedom.

I have a cousin who spent two terms in Viet Nam, a war that by hindsight was meaningless. He carried a flame-thrower and would not talk of his experience. When I was in college, I kept after him until one day he shouted at me, “If you saw men burning to death, and you had caused it, how would you feel?” I was so sorry that I forced that admission out of him. He became a loner later on, growing more and more depressed until he finally took his own life. He was buried with full military honors for what he had done for his country.

The freedom we enjoy is due to great loss. There is a song that goes something like this: “Amazing love, how can it be, that Christ my Lord would die for me.” As followers of Jesus, we also are set free. We are free from sin, free from guilt; we are even free from death! Jesus’ death was so we may live. The Apostle Paul wrote, “He who knew no sin became sin, so that in him we can become the righteousness of God.” He also said, “He gave up his riches in glory that through his poverty, we may become rich.” The One who set us free also is the One who paid the price for our freedom. He “endured the cross because of the joy set before him. “

Moses gave 611 commandments that the Jews must obey. There are 365 negative and the rest positive. No one could really live up to all those commands. All the commandments did was to show us a norm for our behavior, but what they really did was reveal to us our sin.

But it was more important to God that we be forgiven of our sins—that we have freedom and live forever—than it was for His only Son to remain in glory. Jesus is the Peace Child, sent to earth to turn God’s enemies into his friends. And Jesus said, “You are my friends if you keep my word.” What was his word? What were his commands for us? Believe in him, and love one another. It is so simple. Faith and love are the only two commandments we must live by.