

Decoration Day

This weekend many people throughout the country will be celebrating Memorial Day. Many people will be grilling out hamburgers and hotdogs and (shameless plug ahead) others will be having a breakfast at Walnut Point State Park.

Where did all this come from? It is hard to tell exactly, but it seems to have come from a southern tradition called Decoration Day. This occurred in small communities throughout the southern United States in pre-Civil War times. Decoration Day generally consisted of meeting at the local cemetery and decorating the graves of those who had gone on before. There would usually be a worship service, a potluck meal, and playing gospel music throughout the day.

This was a time of sharing in faith. The younger generation got to hear of the faith of the older generation and of the faith of those they had never met. The Bible is filled with wonderful stories of the faith of the saints of old. We can refer to them on a regular basis. But there are also stories of the great faith of the saints in our neck of the woods that we may too soon forget if we don't take the time to remember and pass them along.

One story that I reminded of is of my great grandparents. Many years ago they helped get a hymnal published. They stepped out in faith to provide the financial support needed to make it. The hymnal is "Praise for the Lord." It is one of the most widely used songbooks among churches of Christ today. Many churches are using this wonderful tool for His praise today. All that remains is a footnote in the forward of the book. But my great-grandfather mentioned late in life that he was so glad he stepped out in faith to make it happen.

This weekend as you sit around with your family remember the stories of your family, both living and passed. Laugh about the funny stories. Cry about the tender stories. Work to instill the faith that was passed to you to those who come after. Do it not because the greatest story of all started not with "Once upon a time" but with "Once upon a tree."

-Alex Swango