

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
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Welcome. I am Doctor David Thorne and this week's message is titled “The Day After the Salute: Honor That Outlasts the Holiday”.

This week's scripture lesson comes from Romans thirteen seven where it says “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed,
revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.” Other scriptures with today's message are James Chapter 2 verses 15 to 17, Galatians six nine and John fifteen thirteen.

May the Lord bless the reading of His Word.

Beloved, here is a question for the day after Veterans Day. What happens when the flag banners come down, the social media posts stop
scrolling, the store discounts expire, and November 12 arrives? Did we honor veterans, or did we merely observe a holiday?

Veterans Day has a history worth remembering. It began as Armistice Day, first observed on November 11, 1919, one year after the armistice
that ended the fighting of World War I, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. In 1938, Congress made Armistice Day a federal holiday. After World War II and Korea, the nation recognized that sacrifice and service were
not limited to one war, and in 1954 the holiday was renamed Veterans Day, to honor all who have served in the United States Armed Forces.
For a time, it was moved to a Monday in October, but the outcry was so strong that it was restored to November 11 in 1978.

Veterans Day is not Memorial Day. Memorial Day remembers those who died in service. Veterans Day honors all who have served, living veterans,

in wartime and peacetime, and it calls us to thank them while they are still here to receive it. That is why the day after matters.
A veteran does not stop being a veteran when the calendar turns. The need for honor does not expire at midnight.
The question is whether our gratitude is a mood or a practice.

Romans thirteen seven says, “Pay to all what is owed to them… honor to whom honor is owed.”
Notice that Paul does not describe honor as a feeling. He describes it as a debt. A debt is not paid by a single emotional moment,
it is paid faithfully.

It is easy for a holiday to become a ceremonial payment. We post a flag, attend a meal, thank a veteran at the store,
and feel the account is settled. But honor is not settled by one day of applause. Biblical honor means seeing a person rightly,
speaking of them truthfully, and caring for them consistently. It means honoring veterans not only as symbols, but as neighbors,
people with names, families, memories, wounds, gifts, and ordinary needs.

We honor veterans when we do not reduce them to politics. We honor them when we listen without prying, thank without exploiting,
and support without making them perform their pain for us. We honor them when we remember that their service was real, whether or not it
fits our preferred narrative. And we honor them best when we remember that honor is not worship.
Our ultimate allegiance belongs to Christ alone, but genuine love for neighbor takes the form of sustained respect.

The day after Veterans Day is a test. Will we pay the debt of honor only when there is a banner to remind us?

James Chapter 2 verses 15 to 17 says that if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking daily food, and we say, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, our faith is dead.
In the same way, gratitude that never becomes action is only a slogan.

The day after Veterans Day, many needs remain. Some veterans are navigating unemployment or underemployment.
Some are fighting housing instability. Some are waiting on health care. Some carry post-traumatic stress, moral injury, grief,
or loneliness that no parade can touch. Some families are caregivers behind the scenes.
Some widows and widowers of veterans are still grieving long after the holiday. If we honor veterans only when it is convenient,
we have not yet learned the shape of Christian love.

The church can do concrete things like make a phone call, send a note, provide a meal, offer transportation,
help a family connect with benefits and local resources, pray for chaplains and VA workers, support organizations that serve veterans well,
and create a safe space where veterans can speak honestly without being made into heroes or projects.

We do not need to ask intrusive questions. We can simply say, “I am glad you are here. How can I pray for you this week?”

If a veteran is hungry, a flag sticker is not lunch. If a veteran is lonely, a slogan is not company. Gratitude must put on work clothes.

Galatians six nine says, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
The Christian life is not built on occasional mountaintop moments. It is built on ordinary faithfulness. That is why Veterans Day must be more than one day a year. The day after the holiday is where discipleship actually lives.

Keep the conversation going in your home. Teach children what Veterans Day means and why it is different from Memorial Day.
Pray for those currently serving and for their families. Recognize veterans in the life of the church without turning them into idols
or ignoring their humanity. Volunteer with a veterans organization. Check in on a neighbor. Advocate for care that is worthy of those who
served. Keep showing up in small ways.

Jesus said in Matthew 25 that when we care for the least of these, we care for Him. Many veterans carry unseen wounds.
The church must be a place where the wounded are not shamed, where the grieving are not rushed, and where the strong are not worshiped.
The day after the salute is the day to be the church, patient, present, and faithful.

This week, not next November, do one concrete thing. Write a note to a veteran. Make a phone call. Ask, “How can I pray for you?” Volunteer with a local veterans ministry or support organization.
If you are a veteran and you are struggling, please do not carry it alone, speak to a pastor, a trusted friend, or a qualified counselor.
The church should be a safe place to seek help, not a place where you must pretend to be strong.

As a congregation, let us commit to sustained honor, praying for service members and their families, supporting veterans in practical ways, remembering both Veterans Day and Memorial Day rightly, and teaching the next generation
that gratitude is not a season but a way of life.

If you are a veteran, a family member of a veteran, or someone carrying wounds from service, I invite you to come forward for prayer.
You do not have to tell your story to be prayed for. If you have been moved today to commit to honor that outlasts the holiday,
come and kneel or stand before the Lord. If you do not yet know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, come to Him today.
He is the one who said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” as we see in John fifteen thirteen.
Come and receive His grace, and come and be sent to love in ordinary days. Our prayer team is here.

Please bow your head while we pray.

Father, we thank You for the men and women who have served our nation. Thank You for their courage, their sacrifice,
and the cost borne by their families. Forgive us for the times we have honored veterans with our lips while neglecting them with our lives.
Teach us to pay the debt of honor with sustained respect, practical love, and faithful prayer.
Heal the wounded in body, mind, and spirit. Comfort those who grieve. Strengthen caregivers and families.
Give your church courage to serve on the ordinary days, not just the holidays. Help us honor rightly without worshiping wrongly,
and keep us faithful to Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed. For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed.

Thank you for watching and listening and we will see you all next week.

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