

Thank you, Veterans! Thank you, Jesus!

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

I am not a veteran, but I have many veterans who I call friends and even more in my family. As I have thanked them for their service over the years, I always find them humble. Many have even said something along the lines of "Serving my country just came naturally to me." Yet, I don't find the sacrifices that they have made natural at all. I think of veterans as those who have intentionally placed themselves in harm's way to protect me and my freedom. I find them brave and patriotic -yes of course! - but, I struggle to think of such sacrifice as natural. I see it more as a selfless choice and one for which I am thankful more than I can express. Our brave men and women are heroes and deserve our thanks and admiration every single day.

We also remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives so we may enjoy such freedom. They go to the hands of the One who understands what it means to sacrifice for the freedom of others—Jesus Christ. He said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Since the sacrifices of our veterans were made for our freedom, we honor them the most when we live out the gift of Christ's total freedom. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). Let us fully celebrate our freedom from sin by sharing this Good News every single day! Let it be light for all to see like fireworks in the dark sky! Let it be shown in our words, actions, and attitudes- all to the glory of God. Freedom is to be celebrated and we do that best when God's love overflows in our lives and into the lives of others.

God bless our veterans! Thank you for the freedom to share God's freedom with the world!

~ Eric Gerken, Director of Family & Youth Ministry