

Three 'Rs' the Essence of a Memorial Service

Bishop Jones Calls for Remembrance, Recognition and Respect of the Dead

Jul 21, 2013

Bishop Walter A. Jones, Jr., of the Baptized Pentecostal Church of Holiness in Louisville, delivered the memorial address today. The former chief of Chaplain Service at the Louisville VA Medical Center honored the Gold Star families in attendance: "We look to you, thanking God for your presence."

Jones delivered a sermon with a three-part theme, calling for *remembrance*, *recognition* and *respect* of the dead. He selected passages from the Bible and the Gettysburg Address to stress his points. Jones quoted Lincoln: "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here," referring to those killed in the Civil War battle. "To remember is to commemorate," Jones said. "God has given us the capacity to remember. The memory of each one is significant."

"Liberty and freedom," Jones continued, "are words sometimes taken for granted unless they are defended." By recognizing those who have made the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield, the nation acknowledges them for their love of God and country, he said.

He commended attendees for keeping alive the memory of those who sacrificed their lives: "It is for us to continue lifting the virtues of liberty and freedom for which they lived and died." Jones noted that Lincoln expressed a similar sentiment at Gettysburg: "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion ... We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." Jones pointed out that Americans must never fail to respect the war dead for their immense sacrifices.

Jones ended by saying, "Let us uphold the Godly standards for which our country was founded."

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Past Commander-in-Chief Ray R. Soden, 1973-1974, who died July 22, 2012, was remembered. Soden, was a WWII Navy vet who served aboard the *USS Claxton* in both the European and Pacific theaters of operations. He served as an Illinois state senator from 2003-2005. A member of Post 2149 in Bensenville, Ill., Soden was commander-in-chief during VFW's 75th anniversary in 1974.

Ladies Auxiliary National President Leanne Lemley and VFW Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton participated in the traditional symbolic tribute to departed comrades. Father William Bleiler, VFW's national chaplain, conducted the memorial ritual.

Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Julia Price performed moving renditions of "Sleep Soldier Boy" and "If Heaven Was Needing a Hero." The Graefenburg Baptist Church Choir sang "Patriotic Medley" and "Be Thou My Vision."

As is customary at VFW's Memorial Service, Gold Star Families were specially recognized.