

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Ultimate Sacrifice

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As our country continues to fight the war against terrorism, we suffer the loss of brave men and women. Young soldiers, committed to protecting America from terrorism and establishing freedom in oppressed areas, are dying for a noble cause. This week Pat Tillman gave his life while engaged in a fire fight in Afghanistan.

Mr. Tillman's death captured the headlines due to the fact that he, being a popular professional football player, gave up a multimillion dollar contract without fanfare to put his life on the line as a soldier in a special division in the Army. We marvel at his humility and self-sacrifice to serve his country while giving up comfort and riches. The jersey numbers he wore in college, and as a pro will be retired in his honor. Words of praise for this brave twenty-seven year old cannot fully capture the significance of this young man's sacrifice. He is truly deserving of the title of hero. He has offered the ultimate sacrifice.

The reaction to Mr. Pat Tillman's sacrifice should cause

us to pause and think of how great Jesus' sacrifice was. We marvel at what Pat gave up to serve. We focus on Mr. Tillman's reason for putting his life on the line. We deeply appreciate his willingness to die so we can continue to live. Mr. Tillman's ultimate sacrifice gives us the opportunity to meditate upon the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made.

Jesus gave up the glory of heaven to come to earth and die. Jesus considered this special for he prayed to receive again the "glory" which he had and shared "with" the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). Paul connects Jesus' submission with His grace. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through this poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). While we marvel at Mr. Tillman's willingness to give up a three million dollar contract to serve and die, how much more amazement floods our hearts as we try to imagine one giving up the glory of heaven to come to this earth and die.

Jesus gave his life so his

enemies could live. While Jesus recognized that there is no greater love than for one to lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13), Jesus offered his life for the benefit of his enemies. Those crucifying and mocking him were the objects of his prayer for forgiveness while he suffered to the death on the cross (Luke 23:34). Paul drives home the greatness of God's love and Jesus' sacrifice by saying, "Christ died for the ungodly" and "while we were enemies" (Romans 5:6,10).

While Mr. Tillman died so that his friends, family and all those on the side of democracy could continue *this life* in freedom, Jesus died so man could obtain *eternal life*. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

While we pause to remember a fallen hero, who deserves great praise. We thank him yet for another reason. His sacrifice allows us to pause and think of how Jesus' death is indeed the ultimate sacrifice.