

YOU DO YOUR DUTY

**Remembrance Sunday – November 12, 2017 Hebrews 11: 39-40 &12: 1-4
The Church of the Covenant**

My Dad, a World War II veteran, was part of the Greatest Generation, as the book by Tom Brokaw referred to it, who won World War II, came home and made America the economic powerhouse it is today, peopled the civic groups that kept communities strong, and were leaders in their churches that grew them to their height after World War II. They built strong families, communities, churches and nation. What was their secret? The title of this sermon is a quote from my Dad who said these words to me three times as I recall over the course of his life.

The first time was on 9/11 when the terrorists had crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and a group of stalwart passengers led by veteran and strong Christian, Scott Beemer, intentionally crashed Flight 93 into an empty field here in Western Pennsylvania, rather than allowing the terrorists to crash it into either the White House or the Capitol in Washington, D.C. The great symbols of our nation, of our economic might, our military might and our political might were under attack. So I desperately tried to get through to my parents on my cellphone. And if people recall, it was all but impossible to get through on that day. But after about 100 attempts I did, to discover my parents were about to head off to a meeting at church. I said, "Maybe you should stay home." To which my Mother responded (and I had the feeling she was modifying a quote she had heard from World War II). She said, "If we change our lives at all then the terrorists have won. We're going to church!" And I said to them, "Well, perhaps I should come home from Alexandria, Virginia to make certain you are alright and safe." To which my Dad said, "No you have a responsibility to the people of your church. YOU DO YOUR DUTY!" By the way, we're about to be late to church. CLICK. OK. Message received. My responsibility is to do my duty.

(I am going to come down out of the pulpit now for a moment to come over to three gentlemen, who are also part of the Greatest Generation and who all served with distinction in World War II) The three of you are our LIVING SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS TODAY of what it means to DO OUR DUTY. We honor you today.

The second time my Dad uttered the phrase "You do your duty" to my recollection is last year as he was in rapid physical decline that ultimately led to his death. It was a Saturday and he had grown exceptionally weak from the kidney failure that would ultimately claim him, and he fell, and needed to be taken to the emergency room. The ambulance had been called. I had a wedding that day. I said to him, "Dad, I'll accompany you in the ambulance and I'll call and find someone else to conduct the wedding." He told me NO. He said: "You do your duty and your duty is to conduct that wedding service. I'll be fine. You come visit me when the wedding is over." Message received, Dad. My first responsibility is to do my duty.

(I am going to come down out of the pulpit now for a second time and come over to Catherine Bashoum, whose Father, Scott, was killed about a year ago, in the line of duty as a police officer.) You remember that sad tragedy. He, of whom the world was not worthy, gave his life to make us safe and free). We thank you for your sacrifice, Catherine, and we remember today your Dad who is a SERMON ILLUSTRATION of what it means to do our duty. We honor, love and support you today.

The third time my Dad uttered the phrase “You do your duty” was on the day he died, July 10, 2016. It was a Sunday and we had a wonderful guest preacher, David Shrader, preaching. I went over early to my parent’s home that morning to see my Dad; the day before had been a rough day and I knew and he knew he was dying. And I said to him, “Dad, why don’t I stay here with you, just sit beside your bed and pray with you, there’s a guest preacher today; they really don’t need me.” And Dad said, “No, Stu. You do your duty. You are the pastor and your duty is to go to church today. I’ll be fine.” Message received Dad. And, of course, he was to pass away at two minutes to twelve, listening to the sermon on the radio, as his son pronounced the benediction the father went into eternity to meet His Savior Jesus, face to face, having finished the race and, may I say, done his duty. The last words spoken to his son.

Our scripture from the New Testament book of Hebrews reminds us “*we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses*” (Hebrews 12: 1) We are surrounded by those veterans who lost their lives in wars because they loved us more than their own life. Surrounded by first responders who did their duty and lost their lives in service to our community. We are surrounded by veterans and first responders who chose to do their duty, at great personal risk to themselves, for safety and freedom and every value we cherish in this life. We are surrounded by Jesus, who as it says, “*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*” (v. 2) and who went to Calvary to die for us and our salvation, who saw His duty and did it for us and for the glory of His Father in heaven. Do you think you’ve figured out by now what made the Greatest Generation the Greatest Generation?

People, no more whining. No more entitlement. Be done with lesser things. No more thin-skinned easily offended bruised egos. No more self-centered, self-love that only is interested in self and not the love of others. **Duty is that we love something or someone more than we love ourselves.** It is no secret what built the church, what made safe communities, what raised up our nation. People, YOU DO YOUR DUTY...in Jesus’ name. Amen.

By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania

IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!