

My Visit to the Korean War Memorial in Washington DC  
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On Saturday, June 26, 2021 the weather was hot and humid in the nation's capital. It was a day after the 71st anniversary of the Korean War. A group of us, five Baptist pastors from DC, Philadelphia, and Boston came together for a day trip to visit the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam War Wall of Remembrance, and the WWII Memorial. Despite the hot weather, many visitors were there to pay their respects to these fallen heroes. As we were taking pictures at the WWII Memorial, the tourists who passed by took notice of my KWVA cap with a cross on it. I felt like a VIP on this day. Unfortunately, when we finally made our way to the Korean Memorial Park, we found it was under construction. A wire fence surrounded the 19-foot tall statues of patrolling soldiers. I noticed several wreaths were left from the recent ground-breaking ceremony for the Korean War Wall of Remembrance.

From this visit two thoughts came to mind. First, it gave me a renewed appreciation for all those soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice—their very lives—to protect a small and unknown country called Korea. When the “Land of the Morning Calm” was thrust into chaos by a surprise attack by North Korea on June 25, 1950, American soldiers responded immediately to their nation's call to promote freedom and liberty around the world by defending Korea from Communist aggression. As a native Korean, I feel a deep appreciation for U.S. soldiers who gave up their youthful lives on foreign soil. They remind us that “Freedom is not free.” As the Bible says, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13).” As we are eternally indebted to our “friends,” it is our responsibility to honor them. The Korean War is sometimes referred to as “The Forgotten War.” But we can never forget. These soldiers shall be remembered forever by Koreans as heroes who saved our nation and allowed it to become one of the most thriving, truly stable democratic governments in the world today. Korea is a key ally of the U.S. in the region and the U.S.-Korea military alliance remains strong. The 8<sup>th</sup> army has never left the country since the war broke out. Our U.S. troops must stay in Korea as long as there is a threat from the North.

Second, because our troops shed their blood on Korean soil, we have a hope and a future. As I think about the North Koreans under the dictatorship of the Kim family for three generations, my heart aches for the people there. There is no freedom of religion, no freedom of the press, no freedom of speech. Although the people in the North may be without much hope in a worldly sense, there is the future hope of redemption through the Second Coming of Christ, when the yoke of oppression and suffering will be vanquished and both the living and the dead will be judged. Jesus told his disciples in regards to persecution and confusion under the Roman Empire, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (John 14:27).” South Korean Christians have been praying for North Korea for more than a generation. We are patiently waiting for God to do a great work in upending decades of satanic control in the North. But even as we wait for the political winds to change, we know that ultimately, it is the spiritual that remains. God's divine plan is to set up His

kingdom of righteousness on earth, which He foretold in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. The Bible says, "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44)."

The Korean War Memorials are special reminders to Christians of God's divine purpose. These memorials serve as concrete reminders of the freedom, peace, and hope we have in Christ. And we should take heart knowing that no sacrifice is wasted in God's plan of redemption. As Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)." Let us labor together for the Lord in preparation for His coming. Maranatha!