

The Story of Desmond Doss

by Steve Zehr

The sermon recounts the inspiring story of Desmond Doss, a man of unwavering faith who served as a medic in WWII without ever touching a weapon, exemplifying courage and conviction in the face of adversity.

Duration: 44:18

Scripture: Exodus 20:13, Psalm 102:11-13, Psalm 103:1, Psalm 103:20-22

Topics: "Story"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells the story of Desmond Doss, a man who exemplified unwavering faith and commitment to God. Desmond grew up with a strong belief in the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' and was deeply affected by the violence he witnessed during World War II. Despite facing ridicule and opposition, Desmond refused to carry a weapon and became a medic instead. He displayed incredible bravery and selflessness, saving the lives of many soldiers on the battlefield. The speaker encourages the audience to learn from Desmond's example and remain steadfast in their own faith, even in the face of peer pressure.

Transcript

I greet you in the name of Christ this evening. I appreciated those testimonies and those reports that were given. You know, non-resistance is not a life of inactivity.

I think pacifism is one of the worst positions that you can take. It is a position of rebellion against authority, the government, and yet it's not taking up the cross and following Christ. Peter and all the disciples were pacifists and they were traitors to Jesus before the death of Christ.

But what happened after Christ's resurrection and Pentecost? They went out and turned the world upside down because they loved the world. It was suffering love. And that's what my story is tonight a little bit.

Psalms 102 says, let's turn to that. Psalms 102 verse 13, I'd like to read a few verses here. Like as a father, that is like God is to us.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field.

So he flourishes, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone. And the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness

unto children's children.

And verse 18, this is the one I really, the theme verse tonight. To such as keep his covenants and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments. Hearken unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Tonight, I'd like to tell you the story of Desmond Doss.

How many of you know or ever heard of Desmond Doss? Now, I know I told a few of you just in the last couple of weeks. But prior to that, raise your hand if you have ever heard of Desmond Doss. I don't see one person here.

And I didn't know about this story. I kind of stumbled across this story a couple of years ago. And it has just intrigued my mind ever since.

And if I understand right, the instruction class was on non-resistance. And we had this talk here tonight on Casp. And I just thought this would be a good chance to tell this story.

It's not a short story. But I think it's a worthwhile one. I've been praying about this story.

And I hope that you take from this story the principles of keeping the covenant you have with God. Of building a life of conviction against peer pressure. That no matter what happens, you will serve your Lord.

That's what I want you to take home. A man that would not bend, would not break. You know, all through history, God has had his people.

He's had Joseph. He's had Daniel. He's had Esther.

He's had Ruth. People that stood alone and did what was right, no matter what the consequences may be. And God still has his people today.

And he can have you if you will submit to his will in your life and keep his covenant. Desmond Doss, he wasn't raised just like me and you. He was born in 1913.

And he was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist. Okay, so that's the context. I hope that you can, my prayer is that you will remember many times we can find life lessons.

That even put us to shame, even though we may not agree with everything of the details of their faith. He grew up, he was just a little boy like a lot of little boys are when they're small. And he grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia.

And as long as he could remember in their living room, in their house, up on the wall was a motto. A little picture motto his father had bought, picked up at an auction. And in that motto in the center was the Lord's Prayer.

And all the way around was the Ten Commandments. Each one of these commandments had a picture to go with the commandment. And the Sixth Commandment was, Thou shalt not kill.

And in that picture was the picture of Cain and Abel with Abel laying sprawled out on the ground. Cain standing over him with a long club. And Desmond used to pull up a chair and he'd climb up there and he'd gaze at that picture.

He'd just stare at that picture. That picture fascinated him. His mother was very devout.

She taught him these commandments. Thou shalt not kill. And as he looked at these pictures, he could not understand.

His older brother was his best friend. And as he looked at that, he said, How could a brother do such a thing? How could a man kill his own brother? And in his mind, it seemed to be saying, God was speaking to him, Desmond, if you love me, you will never take life. He grew up kind of a normal boy, but he was very tenderhearted and kind.

As a young man, the call came over the radio, they were listening to the radio, that there had been a bad accident down the street, down the road, down in town there, and they needed blood to give to this man. So he gets up and he walks three miles one way and gives blood three miles back. A few days later, the call comes out.

They need blood again. He did it again, three miles out, three miles back. It was just the way he was as a young man.

He cared about people. A defining moment came in his life. There was many times in his life that were life-altering.

But one of the defining moments for him came. These were the depression years now. His father had a very difficult time and struggled with moods and depression.

And his father would drink at times. One day, his father and his uncle were drinking. They got into an argument and it escalated into a fight.

His father pulled out a pistol and would have shot his uncle had his mother not jumped in between them and said, Give me that gun. The police are on the way. And if they catch you with that gun, you are going to be in big-time trouble.

Neither one of the men, they both highly respected his mother. His father gave her the gun. She took this .45 pistol, gave it to little Desmond and said, Run, go hide this gun.

As he took this pistol, this weapon of death, and ran and hid it, he looked at this pistol. And he came back just in time to watch them loading up his father into the police car. But this became in his mind the image of Cain and Abel.

It impacted this little Desmond. And to him, the story of Cain and Abel was real. And from that moment on, he made a vow that he would never touch a gun.

It so impacted his life. He made a vow that he would never touch a gun again. Life went on.

He grew up. December 7, 1941. The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, a date which will live in infamy, they say.

Franklin D. Roosevelt asked for a declaration of war upon Japan and Germany. And suddenly the United States was thrust into one of the most horrific wars this world has ever known. Like I said, Desmond wasn't trained with all the things that we were.

He didn't have a godly father. He didn't necessarily have all the teaching and the background that some of us have. But the draft for Desmond presented a challenge.

How could he go to war and not touch a gun? And be true to this vow that he had promised God and himself that he would never touch a gun. And he made up his mind he'll be a medic. And so he went to the draft board and he signed up.

He told them he wants to be a medic. And they laughed at him. They said, listen, this is the army.

We tell you what to do. You don't tell us what to do. Well, so he joined the military.

He joined the army. Everyone was required to carry a gun. Even the medics were required to carry a .45 pistol.

Everybody was required to qualify on the rifle range. Boot camp and basic training were extremely difficult for Desmond. As you can imagine, his position was not popular.

One commander decided to use peer pressure to try to break Desmond. They let him be in the medics. They moved him to a rifle company.

Now you can imagine what peer pressure is like, you young men. Have you ever faced peer pressure? Try being a non-combatant in a rifle company. With a vow that says I will never touch a rifle.

One of his fellow soldiers was determined to kick him out. He said, what do we need this guy for? And he went up the chain of command trying to get him kicked out. Well, he had religious rights.

At that point, the laws read that he could do this. It was kind of a loophole. By the way, this Desmond Doss was the only man that has ever received, the only non-combatant to have received the Medal of Honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor bestowed upon a soldier in the U.S. military.

I forgot to say that first of all. Now there was some in Vietnam War that received that posthumously, but he was the only one up to this point in history that received it in person from the president. So Doss always, he told his soldiers, don't doubt my courage.

I will be beside you. While you are taking life, I will be saving life. And this Jack Glover said, listen, and he used words I shouldn't use in the pulpit, but he said, look, if you don't have a weapon, you're not going to be by my side.

He was threatened. There was a lot of things that happened. And they tried to tell him, finally, they couldn't get rid of him.

So finally, they made life harder and said, look, we know what you are. You're a conscientious objector. We want you to leave the Army.

Here's the papers. Fill it out. You're a conscientious objector.

Get out of here. And he was, it was kind of interesting. He said, I'm not a conscientious objector.

I'm not against conscience. I'm a conscientious supporter. He supports conscience.

He thought they were the ones that were against conscience. So anyway, that's the way he approached life. It was a time of severe testing.

He was regarded as a pest. No one wanted to be associated with him. They went to eat with him.

They went to work with him. He didn't have friends. He was ridiculed and criticized.

And one of them said, Doss, I promise you, when we get out on the battlefield, I'm going to kill you. They hated him. And you can imagine what that's like.

It is your buddies in life, especially in these situations, that get you through. And here he was alone with nobody to take his stand with him in this very hostile environment. He was all alone except for one thing.

He had God and he loved his Bible. I want this part of the story to challenge you to the core. This young man loved his Bible.

He was not alone. Just like Daniel in the lion's den. He took time to pray.

He took time to read his Bible. And he read it whenever he could. And he would pray before he went to bed and they would make fun of him.

They would ridicule him. They would do horrible things to him. Some of the accounts of his fellow soldiers given years later after the war.

They regretted the way they treated him. And they would throw shoes at him while he was praying. And he never reacted.

He never lost it. He never flashed anger. He never exposed his displeasure to them.

He was patient and kind. And years later they said, How do you think Desmond was able to put up with that? And they said, I don't know. I have no idea.

The only thing I can think of is that he was 100% in his religion. Now where are you in your religion? If he would have been 99%, do you think he could have taken it? And that's the testimony of the fellow soldiers years later that regretted what they did to him. He was 100% in his faith and what he believed.

Now there's another commandment he had learned from his mother. And that was to remember the Sabbath. Now that is the Saturdays, Friday night till Saturday evening.

And he would not bend on that commandment. And this became very much a trial. But every Friday evening he would go to the commander, get his pass.

He would leave. He would go into town, find some little church. And he would spend his day there in prayer and Bible reading.

Friday evening or Saturday evening he'd come back and he'd check back in. And Sunday they gave him the worst jobs they could possibly give him. Because he's getting these privileges for religious reasons.

They hated him already. He would clean the toilets. And they gave him all the worst duty they could.

And he never complained. What about you when your mom and dad tell you to clean up your room? You see, this is where it starts. August 17, 1942, he was married to the love of his life.

Her name was Dorothy. I didn't write that down. And now he had another reason to want to pass.

And the army had another lever against him. He was finally moved to a medical unit, much to his joy. He enjoyed that.

He was glad. It gave him a little bit of relief. But there he had a commander that was a Jew.

And he appealed to this man's Jewish religion. He said, look, you and I believe the same. The Jews said, we are in the army now.

Things are different. You see how the world tries to reason with you? Like Psalms here says, to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them. And it made no difference to him if they were in the army or not.

He was not going to work on the Sabbath. And there again he frustrated and brought the whole United States military to the point where they had to respect him on that point. I'll get into that later.

As this thing went up, these questions would go up. He had different... That commander would not sign his passes, would not let him go even to go see his wife. But he just kept asking.

He didn't lose his temper. He didn't give up. And eventually he started to give... He was given the pass because the higher ups said, there's no way we can deny him.

They were moved around different places, basic training. Each place had its challenges, different places he went. They had mountain training.

And just a notation there. In mountain training, one of the things they had to learn to do was tie knots. One of the knots they had to learn was the bowline knot, which is a knot with a noose that doesn't slip.

You can't hang yourself with it. And as he was messing around with this bowline knot, he discovered kind of by accident that if you double the rope and tie the same knot, you end up with a bowline with two loops in it. And he never forgot that.

It was interesting to him. He kept that in his mind. He felt God gave that to him later on.

He always put people first. In desert training, it was one of the most brutal training courses the military had ever come up with. There was things they didn't know about, human hydration, some of these things.

And in 120 degree weather, with one canteen on these long marches, people died from dehydration. There was deserters. People walked off into the desert and never returned.

And Desmond did his best. One of the things that marked his life, even though these riflemen and all these people hated him, he always put them first. He gave them his water.

He treated their blistered feet. He always put other people first. I appreciate what Ben said about non-resistance, or in his devotion, I think it was, how we put other people first.

And that was what his longing to do was. Now, October of 1943, he faced what he says was one of his most difficult tests. He had some very difficult times.

This is one of the most difficult ones. Captain William T. Cunningham ratcheted this thing up to a brand new level. He was determined to break Desmond and to make him conform.

And he sent out an order that everyone, didn't matter if you were a clerk, a cook, a truck driver, it didn't matter who you were, if you wanted a pass, you had to qualify on the rifle range. And it was a little bit like Daniel and his prayer. It was an order designed to catch him.

Okay? That was the purpose in this whole thing. And he said, you will not get a pass unless you qualify on the rifle range. Desmond didn't show up.

He didn't qualify on the rifle range. And he came on a certain day to get his pass. Now, one of the things that happened is his older brother had been called to the draft.

He got a notice that his older brother was getting ready to ship out across seas. He loved his older brother. He longed to go see his brother one more time before he was sent overseas.

You know the ramifications of what could happen. So he went to get his pass right over this time. Okay.

Went to get his pass. And Cunningham looked at his papers and said, you didn't qualify on the rifle range. You don't get your pass.

He said, I don't have to. You can look right on my papers. It says that I do not have to touch a weapon.

He said, Cunningham told him, I am going to command you to touch this rifle or else I'm going to court-martial you. He said, I'm not going to do it. And he said, listen, I'm going to give you one more chance.

Remember Daniel? You can go back and pray one more time to that idol. And if you don't, I'm going to give you a direct order. If you don't touch this rifle, you're going to be court-martialed.

And he took this rifle, and he was standing face-to-face. He took this rifle, slammed it down butt-first on the ground between them and let go. Even human reaction would require somebody grab that rifle.

Desmond didn't move, and Cunningham grabbed the rifle. He said, I'm not going to touch a weapon. I made a vow.

The higher-ups eventually got a hold of that thing and forced Cunningham to give him the pass because it was in his papers. But when the day came for Desmond to go get a pass and go visit his brother, he walked into Cunningham's office. He said, here's my pass.

I want to go see my brother. Cunningham looked at it, tore it up, threw it in the waste bin. He said, that was one of the lowest points of my life.

He never did get to go see his brother. And by that time, even the fellow soldiers, some of them began to have pity on him. They said, I don't know how that man, that was so inhumane.

He said, I don't know how Desmond did that. But he said, during this hardest time of his life, he said, I knew. Are you listening? These are some of the lessons I want you to get.

He said, I knew. Desmond said, I knew. If I compromise now, it would make it easier to do it again.

And he said, I refuse to touch that rifle. What a lesson. What a lesson in such terrible emotional stress.

It's just amazing to me. In March 1944, he left his wife behind and shipped out to the South Pacific to a little island by the name of Guam. And there, they faced for the first time machine guns, flamethrowers, foxholes, artillery.

Machine guns, they'd fire until the barrels turned red. The brutality. The tricks they'd play to pretend to surrender.

So the Japanese, they'd use women to try to kill the American soldiers. It was a time of just brutality. And of course, these were young men.

They had never seen such a thing before in their life, in spite of all the training. It was a time of terror. But Desmond took his part in this carnage.

He would go out, and he would help the wounded. He would drag them back. He never flinched.

He was always brave. He always went out. He'd go drag them back, and he'd go out at night.

And he was not supposed to do that. They told him, don't go out at night. You're liable to get shot by your own men.

But he did not care. He would always go out. It didn't matter if it was day or night.

He'd go out there, and he'd drag these wounded people back to help them. He said, I have to go. And the medics quickly learned there on Guam that having a red cross on your arm was not an asset.

The Japanese purposefully tried to kill the medics to break down morale in the United States Army. And so he not only was doing a dangerous job in a dangerous place. He was doing the most dangerous job, because he was a target.

And the 77th Division, which was part of the division he was on there in Guam, they developed for themselves. Now, these were the Americans. They fought so hard.

They were so nitty gritty. And so they were such fighters themselves. They developed a reputation as a division for their own hardcore fighting.

I would just call it butchery and brutality myself. But that just tells you something about that 77th Division. They developed a reputation in Japan, mind you, for their fighting.

And this was what Desmond was a part of. But the point I want to make here is that this fighting, one time, and there was witnesses to this, when the fighting was especially intense. Now, I want you to listen to this in the context of what Desmond is going through.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. The Bible says the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and keep his covenant. This tough Cunningham that had slammed this rifle down between them and said, I'm going to court-martial you.

One time in the midst of some of the most heavy fighting, they witnessed that man turn around and run away from the battle. And some of those soldiers, years later, one of those soldiers says, I actually picked up my rifle, drew a bead on that man. I was going to kill him.

This was their commander. This was the man with the gun. Desmond didn't do that.

And slowly but surely, Desmond began to develop his own reputation. He always went to help a wounded buddy. It didn't matter what the machine gun was.

It didn't matter how much fire was going on. It didn't matter what they said. If there was a wounded man, he always went and helped anyone without a rifle.

He developed a reputation. Stories began to circulate that there is a man out there that is helping anyone. They began to find American bandages on Japanese soldiers.

And you could get shot for that if the wrong guy saw you do that. You see, that's what suffering love is. It's not just patriotism.

It's, I will lay down my life for my fellow men. I will do good unto all. And that's what Desmond's convictions were.

There was always a story of Desmond refusing to back down. When the people with guns wouldn't go, he'd go. Then there was Okinawa, the hell hole of the Pacific.

It was cold, it was rainy, and there was mud and blood. Machine gun fire so thick it would literally cut men in half. Now, I don't know how many of you are aware of rifles.

I'm not that impressed with rifles like you used to be, but do you know how often a bullet has to go through you to cut you in half? They walked in blood up to their ankle. When they landed in Okinawa, they didn't know what to expect, but it was fairly quiet at the time. The only thing they saw was dead people being carried out, stacked like cordwood along the side, loaded into trucks.

And that was their first job when they got there, was to load these men out, these dead men. These were the people they were going into Okinawa to replace. And as they walked through that slop and that mud, they literally walked in blood up to their ankles.

They landed to take the place of the 96th Division, which had been just decimated there in Okinawa. And it was called Operation Iceberg. I don't know how they came up with that name.

It was the biggest operation in the Pacific Theater. And their mission on that island was to take the Masada Escarpment. And another name for it was the Hacksaw Ridge.

Now, an escarpment is just a big, tall ridge. It's a naked ridge that ran, I don't know how many, if it was a mile wide. You can just imagine it coming up the one side and then just a sheer drop off on the other side.

Maybe 300, 400 feet high on the face of it. And in the face of that, and then the last 30, 40 feet was just sheer, straight-up cliff that you couldn't climb. And in the face of this escarpment was the Japanese that had months to dig in.

And they had tunnels, they had whole networks, they had pillboxes, machine guns, they had all kinds of weaponry up there. And companies would go out to try to take this. They would go out with 30 men and come back with five or six.

It was just brutal. It was a stagnant war. It wasn't like you would take a position, fight, take another position.

It was stagnant. They would go up on there, they would maybe hold it for a day or so. The Japanese at night would throw them back off with terrible casualties.

One of the things they did there, one of their strategies, they climbed up this. There was no way to get to the top. They had ladders and stuff, but not very many men could go up the ladder at once.

And so they came up with the idea they were going to use cargo nets to climb up this last 30 or 40 feet. So they radioed back to the ship and they got the cargo nets that they had climbed down on to get on the island and they brought them in and they went up there. Now they needed volunteers to climb the little wooden ladders to go up there and hang these cargo nets.

Who do you think volunteered? They needed three men and Desmond was one of them. He went up there and the men said while they were up there hanging this net there was no fire. It was complete silence.

They got all done. The commander said, OK, I want you to go up there. He pointed at one man.

Go up there and see what you find. He climbed up there. The man got to the top.

They heard machine gun fire and everything was quiet. The commander looked at another man and said, I want you to go up there and see what's going on. The second man climbed up there.

They heard machine gun fire and everything was quiet. The commander looked at the third guy and said, I want you to go up there and see what's happening. He climbed up there.

They heard machine gun fire and everything was quiet. Now, would you volunteer to be the fourth person? Desmond said, I'll go up. There's somebody hurt up there.

He climbed up there. He spent, I don't know how long, he spent at least a half hour up there because when he got up there he found out that the man that was wounded, the first guy that got to him needed plasma. He yelled down.

They had to go all the way back down to get plasma. Coming all the way back up. He spent time up there.

God protected this man. OK, I want to point that out later. On April 30, 1945, Company A and B, I don't know what that means to you and me, except that Company B was the one Desmond was in and they were to go out to fight.

Desmond said, I want time to pray. No one, he was given some time to pray, to read his Bible. They went out.

Company B went out. One of the miracles in Okinawa, in fact, I think this is recorded in official history, is that Company B came back that day with no casualties. In fact, it was so astounding that the headquarters called back and said, are you guys sure you were on the right ridge? And the official answer came back,

the official explanation that was recorded was, Desmond prayed.

How is God going to record your life? Will God say, he prayed? Desmond prayed. How much time do you take in prayer? Over the problems you face, over the issues in life, over the temptations, Desmond's prayed. Okay, one of the greatest temptations that Desmond faced, he says this, they were trapped up there on the side of this escarpment, it was fast, night was fast coming, they were trying to be quiet, they knew there was Japanese all around them, he was sitting on a narrow ledge with a few other soldiers and suddenly right below him he hears some strange voices, Japanese voices.

About 10 feet directly below him there's some Japanese soldiers setting up a machine gun. He peeks over the edge and sees them, between him and the soldiers are some hand grenades. Now, what would you do? This question always comes up, if you could take life in order to save life, what would you do? He said, all I had to do, now he's here in the carnage, he's bandaging up these people, he's taking care of them, he sees what war does to people, he knows what that machine gun is going to do the next morning.

And all he has to do, he doesn't have to move, he just has to take a hand grenade, pull the pin and drop it over the edge and he knows he can eliminate that many deaths. He said, that was the greatest temptation I faced in that war. But he said, the Lord said, thou shalt not kill.

I could not take life. The story goes on, I need to move along here quickly, but the account now that he actually won, his fellow soldiers made him a nominee for the Congressional Medal of Honor. One day they were commanded to go up on the ridge, a bunch of them, there's 155 men, they went up, the escarpment got up on the big ridge up there on the plain and the Japanese would let them get up there.

And there they amassed up there, 155 men, they let all the soldiers get up there and then the machine guns opened up and the mortars and artillery and the Japanese just butchered them. 55 out of the 155 got back off that cliff under their own power. It was just havoc up there, the machine guns, the artillery, they said it was just a constant barrage of fire going on.

When they all came down off that ridge, Desmond said, there's men up there that are wounded, I have to go back up. He knew that the Japanese at night when night come, the Japanese would torture the wounded. And he knew that he had to go back up there.

He climbed that cargo net and went back up there. The first man he got to, he drug to the edge. And just like that, he was like, how am I going to get this man down over this edge? This is a little skinny guy, 150 pounds maybe.

How am I going to get this guy down over this ledge, a wounded man? And just like that, he said, God put into my head that bowline knot that he had learned in West Virginia in basic training. And he tied that double loop, strapped it around that man's legs and lowered him over the edge. He went back for 12 hours, averaging one man every 10 minutes.

In the midst of machine gun fire and a hail of bullets, he took one man at a time, sometimes as far as 125 yards, sometimes two people at a time, one on each arm. He saved 70 people and lowered them in 12 hours all day long. He said, I'd get to the edge and he'd say, God, just help me go back.

For one more. He'd go back across there and pull him back. The men down below were incredulous.

They kept telling him, there's some nut up there and he won't come down. Desmond's up there. The guy's crazy, but he wouldn't stop.

Later, the Japanese soldier, the Japanese soldier that came forward and he said, you know, he said, I was there. He said, I tried many times to kill that guy and every time I squeezed the trigger, my rifle would shoot. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.

God honors them that honor him. I just think it's an incredible story. He was saving life instead of taking it.

Okay, well, the story goes on there in that battle, that Hacksaw Ridge there. The order finally came down days later that that ridge is going to be taken at all costs. You must take that ridge.

We've waited here long enough. It doesn't matter how many men it takes. We want you to take that ridge.

As you can understand, Company B trusted in Desmond explicitly. In fact, they refused to go to war without him. The problem with this big battle they had planned, they had a couple different divisions all coordinating times that on Saturday they were going to, on Saturday.

This was the Sabbath day. They were to take this ridge on the Sabbath day. This was orders from headquarters.

Desmond said, I have to pray. Company B said, we're not going unless Desmond goes. You see how this all changed from basic training? Remember that man that said, if you're not carrying a weapon, you're not being by my side.

Now Company B was saying, if Desmond doesn't go, we're not going. Up the command it goes, the chain of command, and down it comes and says, let Desmond pray. So Desmond took his time.

He read his Bible. What would keep you from your devotions? I'm ashamed to say what keeps me from my devotions. The United States military could not keep Desmond from his devotional life.

The United States Army was held up because of Desmond's devotional life. That is intriguing to me. And so when he finally got done, he said, okay, we can go now.

And they went. He said, this is a job I can do any day of the week. I can help save lives.

And so he didn't have any problem with going there. But that's what was so interesting to me, that he held up a whole war because of his devotional life. Okay, one of the soldiers said, in retrospect, this was years later, he said, if Desmond had not been religious, he would have been much less of a person.

In fact, he would have been more like we were. This was the men, these were the soldiers with the rifles saying that. If Desmond had not been religious, he'd have been much less of a person.

He would have been more like we were. Isn't that beautiful? I think that's fascinating. But in one of those battles there, in that battle that they finally took the ridge that time, they did hold the ridge.

Jack Glover was the one that said, if you're not in the battle with a gun, you're not going to be on my side. He was wounded. And that very man, Desmond went and saved his life.

I just think it's fascinating. Desmond saved his life. Then eventually he was wounded.

Desmond was wounded by a hand grenade. He saw it coming. He was in a foxhole.

He saw this hand grenade coming. He was wounded because he shielded the other soldiers with his body from this grenade. He was filled with shrapnel.

He was wounded. He laid there in the mud for five hours before another medic found him. They bound him up the best they could, put him on a litter, and started hauling him out.

On the way out, he saw another man, unconscious with a head wound. He rolled off the litter, said, give that man the litter, treated his wounds, said, get this guy out of here. He's hurt worse than me.

He laid there for another, for hours. A sniper hit him in the arm, shattered his arm. He took a stalk of a gun and made a splint for himself and crawled to an aid station.

Finally found his way to a ship called the Mercy, first aid ship. And that was the end of his career in the United States military. But when he got to the ship Mercy, he discovered that he had lost, during that little scenario, he had lost his precious Bible.

And somehow word got back to Company B that Desmond lost his Bible out here on Okinawa, on this ridge. And they spent hours, literally hours, Company B combing the side of that mountain until they found Desmond's precious Bible. You know where your Bible is? And how long can it be lost before you miss it? You see, I grew up with all kinds of stories about one W and conscientious objectors.

But I never heard this story in my life. And quite frankly, this story impressed me beyond any of my dreams. Well, quite frankly, I was not impressed very much with the tales that I heard.

Where was the holiness? Where was the separation? To me, a lot of that was pacifism. You know what pacifism was? Do you remember what I said? What Peter's pacifism was? It was the denial of Christ. Now, that's a mouthful maybe to say about our vaunted one W service.

And I know that there was many, many men. I've heard testimonies of men that stood up in the face of some of these things and did what was right. But what I'd like for you to do is to examine your faith and see who you are way down inside.

Do you love the Bible? Or are you just here to put in time? If the church had no standards whatsoever, what would you be tomorrow? Okinawa. You know, war is a terrible thing. We have an unhealthy, foolish, childlike attraction to war in our circles.

That's why I think we get some of the conditions of faith that we suffer from. But 150,000 Japanese soldiers are in hell. One-third of the Okinawa population is in hell, unless they knew Christ.

That doesn't even count the American soldiers that died that are in hell. That's one little island in the Southern Pacific Theater. Desmond was given the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Truman.

And there in front of those delegates, he explained from the Bible why he believes it's wrong to kill. And I just think, what a testimony, and what a place. And like I said, there's things about his life I don't think we have to do.

None of you will ever be a combat medic. Do you know what the Medal of Honor is? It says, The United States Medal of Honor is the highest military honor awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond

the call of duty. The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President of the United States in the name of Congress.

It is the highest. James 1 verse 12 says, Blessed is the man that endures the temptation for when he has tried, he shall receive a crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. That's the Medal of Honor.

And you know what they said about Desmond? They said most times the Medal of Honor is given to a man for an instance of bravery on the battlefield. They said Desmond got the Medal of Honor because it was a life of doing the right thing time after time after time again. That's how he won the Medal of Honor.

And that's how you will win the crown of life. Maybe you wonder, well how can I be a hero? You know, that's my problem. But what happens when somebody turns on the music? There's a problem in this church with that by the way in case you don't know that.

Where's the heroism then? Are you going to stand up to the Father and say this is wrong. This YouTube is detrimental. It's sending my children to hell.

You can stand alone. And hopefully you have enough people around you that you can stand together. That all believe the right thing.

Doing the right thing time after time after time again. And you shall receive a crown of life. Now it's late and I had a song I wanted to sing.

It's a new song so I don't think we'll take the time. Sometime I'd like to introduce this song to our church. I'd love to hear our church sing it.

But I thank you for your attention. I hope that this story of Desmond Doss can challenge you in your life to do the right thing. To keep his commandments and his covenants.

Let's stand for closing prayer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24644.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-zehr/the-story-of-desmond-doss/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net