

The Symbols of Freedom

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I began pondering about all of those symbols of freedom and those symbols that represent America. I have been reflecting on the Statue of Liberty, The American Flag, The Liberty Bell, The American Eagle, Mount Rushmore, The White House, Uncle Sam, and other things that we think of as symbols to our freedom and to America.

Symbols are those things that represent something else. As humans I think we are drawn to symbolism.

Just look at how many people have tattoos. A lot of times it is because they want to carry with them a piece of art that represents themselves or reminds them of someone or something else. They do that with some kind of symbol. They express themselves through that symbol.

Look at the symbols people sometimes wear in jewelry. Maybe it's a cross that speaks of someone's faith. Maybe it's a medal of some sort. Maybe it is an object that helps them recall someone or something that is important to them.

We see symbols in art and in decorative objects as well. We buy those things and display them because we are drawn to them in some way or they speak to us in some way.

Face it. We humans are drawn to symbols, and we express ourselves through them, whether it is through art, jewelry, or even some type of décor which we may display in our home.



The Symbols of America

Today I am going to talk about just those first three symbols of freedom that I mentioned, because they are my favorites. You probably have your favorite symbols of America as well.

The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty is a huge symbol of freedom, both in what it stands for and in its size. Did you know the statue itself and its pedestal stands 305 feet tall?

Move over all you celebrities because Lady Liberty is the most recognizable woman in history! She is an American icon! This woman inspires us. She gives us hope when we look at her.

As most of you know, the Statue of Liberty was gifted to us from France. If you haven't read too much about how she came to being, France was to create the statue and the United States was to create the pedestal. It took a long time because funds had to be raised on both ends. There were lotteries, auctions, and even prize fights here in the United States to raise money, but still the money to pay for the pedestal came in slow. Finally, a newspaper owner in New York offered to print the names of donors in his paper if people would donate. 120,000 people donated over \$100,000 in return for their names being published. That gave the US the needed funds to finish the pedestal. It always amazes me how a little bit of spotlight will spur people on in whatever it is. But hey! It got finished.

The Statue of Liberty is one of those symbols of America that I have never seen but still inspires me when I think about her or even see her in photographs. I will go see her someday!

The United States Flag

Our country's flag is the ultimate symbol. When anyone sees the American flag, no matter where they are from, they know what it stands for and what nation it stands for as they see it fly.

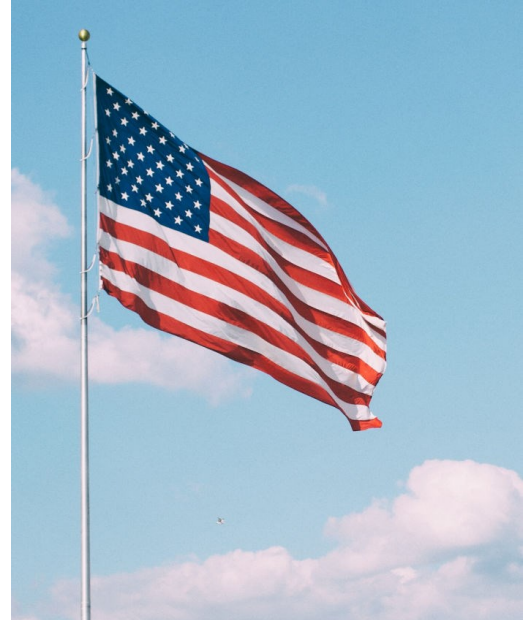
As Americans we probably know our flag best of all. Those 13 red and white stripes stand for the original 13 colonies that were formed when America was first settled. And the 50 stars stand for our 50 states.

Our flag is so important to us that we even have a pledge to it.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

There are all kinds of etiquette for pledging the United States flag. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. We should stand during the pledge. We must have quiet and reverence when the pledge is being given. We should have our hand over our hearts during the pledge. We should take off our hats during the pledge.

And there are many rules of etiquette for carrying and displaying our flag. We must not drag it on the ground or display it backwards. There are all kinds of things to think about when it comes to our national flag etiquette.



All in all, I think it all boils down to respecting the flag. It is a symbol of our freedom, and many have died for those freedoms over the years, so we should give our country's flag some respect.

I am always amazed at the chatter and phones ringing during the Pledge of Allegiance. There are only 31 words in the pledge. You would think we could all be reverent and not cause a ruckus during the amount of time it takes to say 31 words.

We keep an American Flag on a corner of our house and each time I pull into the driveway it is the first thing I see and it reminds me to be grateful for what I have and where I live.

The Liberty Bell

I did a little digging into the Liberty Bell. Wow! I've never really read much about it before. Maybe when I was in grade school, I read briefly about it and I might have

had a teacher who mentioned some of the things about it, but I'm sure nothing I retained. I didn't even know there was a Bible verse on it.

According to ushistory.org...

"The Pennsylvania Assembly ordered the Bell in 1751 to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges, Pennsylvania's original Constitution. It speaks of the rights and freedoms valued by people the world over. Particularly forward thinking were Penn's ideas on religious freedom, his liberal stance on Native American rights, and his inclusion of citizens in enacting laws."

Source: <https://www.ushistory.org/libertybell/>

The Bible verse on the bell was in reference to the 50-year anniversary of Penn's *Charter of Privileges*, which I guess was fitting.

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. Leviticus 25 :10

The bell hung pretty quietly in Pennsylvania's state building after it was installed in 1753, without anyone noticing it except probably those people who lived there until 1830. It was then that the abolitionists adopted the bell for their cause and dubbed it "The Liberty Bell" as a symbol of abolishing slavery.

The Liberty Bell still stands as a symbol of freedom in America even today. It's another one of those pieces of history I would love to visit someday.



The Symbols of Faith

There are many symbols of faith. As I mentioned earlier, some people wear crosses as a symbol to their faith. The fish is one of the earliest symbols of Christianity. There are other symbols of faith as well, such as the empty tomb, doves, angels, the

crown of thorns, the Bible, church, sheep, and praying hands. There are probably even more. There are many things that can remind us of our faith.

I will just go over three of them.

The Cross

I will begin with the cross because without it we would have no Salvation. God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sin. Whenever I see a cross, I am always reminded of that road Jesus took to hang on a cross long ago. It takes me to that place where there was noise, commotion, yelling, beating, and in the end bloodshed. And it was all for the Salvation of men.

The cross is really a symbol of freedom and of faith because it is where Christ set us free.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 1 Peter 2:24

I think we should give the symbol of the cross just as much reverence as we do the American Flag. It's an important part of the Christian life and when we see it, we should remember and be inspired by what Christ did for us there on the cross at Calvary.

The Empty Tomb

Next, I think that the grave is one of the important symbols of our faith. When we think of the empty tomb it reminds us of the victory that we have in Christ. He is no longer in that grave. He rose victoriously. We have a God that conquers!

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. Mark 16:6

Jesus mastered death that day when He left an empty tomb behind. It is one of those symbols that reminds us of something important in history. It reminds us that we too can conquer death and go to that place that Christ has prepared for us.

The Dove

The third symbol of faith I want to mention is the dove. This is one of my favorite faith symbols I guess because it represents peace, and we all want and need peace. Jesus came to give us peace.

We live in such a troubled world and life can get loud, scary, and unsettling at times. I don't know about you, but I need that soft place to land. I need that listening ear of my God. I need that overwhelming peace that only the Lord can give when my heart is pounding, and my life seems to get loud and messy.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

So, when I see a dove or even a graphic or an outline of a dove, I think of peace. I think about Jesus who gives me that peace. It's a symbol that is a great reminder of that wonderful and amazing peace I have in Christ.



Musings

Symbols can have a powerful impact on us as humans. They can play on our mind and help us focus on someone, a thing, or even an experience.

I think when it comes to the symbols of freedom, they can help us remember what sacrifices were given for our freedom. They can help us remember those experiences that our forefathers and the generations that went before us lived through here in America. And I think remembering those things can help us reflect and be grateful.

I also think that these symbols can be reminders not to make the mistakes of the past and of our forefathers. We all know that America's road to freedom and progress has been a long and precarious journey.

I know many of the things that have happened in our country should never have happened. I know there are things in America's past that are tragic. I know that our

forefathers were not perfect. Some were hard, mean, and cruel men. That just tells me that our fight to freedom was a human one. I'm sure you have heard the saying that *those that don't know history are doomed to repeat it*.

I think these symbols help us pause, remember, reflect, and hopefully be grateful for the good things about our country, but inspire us to do better.

When it comes to the symbols of faith, I think they can help us reflect on the God that we have. They can help us reflect on what Jesus did for us. They can help us reflect on our faith and how we want to live.

The Bible talks about remembering over in 1 Peter.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:
1 Peter 3:1-2

I think stirring up our minds with some symbols now and again is a good thing.

