

Follow Me!

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There is a spiritual war going on. We are in the midst of this constant struggle between good and evil. In the trenches and the front-lines, we fight this battle on a daily basis. However, we are not alone in this battle. We have a leader who volunteered to show us the way.

There are many acts of bravery documented in Stephen E. Ambrose's book D-Day. One account that has stuck with me is about Lt. Robert Mason Mathias serving as a platoon leader in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Lt. Mathias was riding in a C-47 Dakota over France at 0227 hours on June 6. Nearing the jump zone the plane starting to take flak from German guns. Lt. Mathias stood and took the first jump position at the open door. You may think this is strange. Leaders are supposed to take up the rear where it is safe. However, this is not the case in the Airborne. The leader is the first to jump out the door. As Lt. Mathias was standing in the door a shell burst beside him. Red-hot flak ripped through his reserve chute into his chest, knocking him off his feet. He pulled himself back to his feet as the jump light came on. He could have stayed on the plane and gotten medical care. Instead, he raised his right arm, yelled out "Follow me!" and leapt into the night. Whether Lt. Mathias died on the way down or from the impact of landing is not known. He was the first American officer killed by German fire on D-Day.

In like manner, our spiritual leader was not willing to command us from the safe confines of heaven. Knowing well what it would cost Him, our Lord made the leap from heaven to earth. Jesus entered the front-lines of the battlefield and ordered us to follow him (Matthew 10:38). Lt. Mathias and countless other soldiers sacrificed themselves to free Europe from the oppression of totalitarianism and protect the freedoms we enjoy today. Likewise, Christ, upon the cross, sacrificed Himself to free us from the oppression of sin (Matthew 26:26-28). When you find yourself feeling alone and lost in the battle, remember that Jesus has been there before. He has fought the battle and won the war. What we must do is follow Him.

- Via Daily Bread, email ministry of the Bear Valley church of Christ