

The Ideals of the Gettysburg Address

Katherine Jeannette Grosso

45 West Glen Drive

Stamford, Connecticut 06202

(203) 967-8208

Cloonan Middle School 8th Grade

Stamford Chapter, NSDAR

804 words

The Ideals of the Gettysburg Address

By: Katherine Grosso

“Fore score in Seven years ago...” –Abraham Lincoln

It was a melancholy day in Gettysburg; November 19, 1863. One of the greatest orators, Edward Everett, was scheduled to give a major speech that would glorify the northern soldiers and elucidate the Battle of Gettysburg. The president at the time, Abraham Lincoln, was invited to say some brief comments after Everett. Everett spoke for two hours on that day, and after he had finished Lincoln took the stage. His brief speech, which came to be known as the “Gettysburg Address” was given in two to three minutes. In those minutes an awe-inspiring 272 words were spoken dedicating the gravesite to the honorable soldiers that gave their lives so that we all may live as equals. The approximate 20,000 people, who were listening quiet and intently, answered his address with thunderous applause.

This address aroused a nation at their time of need. Our nation was torn with scars from the Civil war and Abraham Lincoln provided the stitching. The Battle of Gettysburg was merciless and brutal the South suffered their worst defeat here and lost one-third of there men here as well. He beautifully and eloquently articulated that the men fighting in the war, specifically the Battle of Gettysburg, had given up their lives to keep *our* lives safe, free, and equal. If it weren’t for these soldiers, without a doubt, the war would have been very short, and definitely not in the Union’s favor. There are three ideals that seem to stand out the most in Lincoln’s famous speech, and they all still have meaning today.

First of all, the ideal that *“all men are created equal”* is as applicable to today as it was in 1863. This eloquent phrase is monumentally important in all of our lives. If

segregation wasn't abolished, our lives would be much different; even every day routines like school for example would be altered. Most children living in a modern society can only imagine life with segregation; however, *our* nation lived through times as such. Can you imagine not being allowed to see a friend of yours because their race is different than yours? That is precisely why that phrase is applicable to today; if our nation wasn't equal we couldn't be a nation. "United we stand divide we fall," A quote meaning just as it states, as a nation united we will thrive, but divided we will fall and fail. No person may tell anyone that they are better than them because of their race or color of their skin, because we *are* created as equals.

Secondly, the next ideal applicable to today is how the soldiers of that time gave their "*last full measure of devotion.*" What this means to me is the soldiers gave there last ounce of strength or devotion to their country, in order to fight for what we believe in. This to me describes our volunteer soldiers in Iraq or anywhere, that are giving away their safe lives in their homes, to go to far away places, put their lives in jeopardy and, leave a lot they have behind to keep us safe. They explains to us to always strive for the best give our "*last full measure of devotion.*" in what ever we do, and live like those soldiers, by fighting for what we believe in.

Finally, the last line in the address describes life and government in today's society. "*That government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth*" This phrase was last but certainly not least in Lincoln's address, the statement simply and passionately helped the nation realize that our government remain unified as one nation, in order to meet the needs of its citizens. It needed to be made for the people, by the people, and to rely on the needs of the people, in order for the government to thrive. This is perfectly relevant today because the statement describes government as a whole, even when the statement was made in

1863 the ideas of government still apply to today. Our government needs to be strong, have issues that people need to discuss, and the government will not fail, but triumph!

The Gettysburg Address helped a nation in peril, and is still helping one now. The ideals Lincoln articulated are still relevant in today's society. The war was one that will remain in our hearts forever and so will the speech, despite what Lincoln thought;

“The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but they can never forget what they did there.”-Abraham Lincoln

We will always remember the great triumphs and falls of the Union army, and we will always remember Lincoln's great address.

Bibliography

Clinton, Catherine. The Civil War. New York: Scholastics inc., 1999.

Corrick, James A. The of Battle of Gettysburg. San Diego, California: Lucent Books 1996

Dolan, Edward F., The American Civil War: A House Divided. Connecticut: The Millbrook
Press

Wills, Garry. Forward. The Gettysburg Address. By: Abraham Lincoln. Boston: Houghton
Mifflin Co.

Lincoln, Abraham "The Gettysburg Address"