

At Home Worship - Remembrance Sunday - 08.11.20

Call to worship

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:
the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Lamentations 3.21-23

Let's pray:

Lord, lest we forget, we come to remind ourselves of the debt we owe to so many. Speak to us of the life made possible through their selfless service, so that we may learn to cherish more the things they died for – liberty, justice and peace – ensuring their sacrifice will not have been wasted. Amen.

Prayer of confession

Loving God, you ask us to remember, yet how easily we forget.
When we fail to remember the sacrifices of others, forgive us, God. And help us remember.

When we forget the emotional scars of war left upon children, and their children's children, forgive us, God. And help us remember.

When we forget our own whispered innuendo, our own cutting words, our own snubs, our own finger pointing, our own eyes averted from injustice; forgetting that each person on earth is your beloved child and our sister and brother, forgive us, God. And help us remember.

When we forget your love for us, and that you call us to be your instruments of peace, forgive us, God. And help us remember.

Amen

Lords Prayer

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

Hymn Amazing grace Stf 440

Reading ~ Matthew 5:43-48.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be

children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Message

So today we honour all those who gave their lives - the ultimate sacrifice - that we might have a hope for the future and that all may live in peace. Yet we would all agree, I am sure, that Peace in our world today remains a hope yet to be fulfilled. Increasing tensions in the world make us wonder if we have learnt anything at all.

The problem is of course that there is a deep flaw in all of us that from time to time must simply have its own way. It represents my way or no way. It is black or white, yes or no, there is no room for compromise or negotiation for mercy or forgiveness. It seeks only for the self to win and the other to lose and can even rejoice in the downfall of others.

And try as hard as we might to tame this part of ourselves, when the right buttons are pressed we can be quite uncompromising in demanding our own way.

When we watch conflicts played out on our TV's and dictatorial world leaders playing brinkmanship it is so easy to distance ourselves and our own patterns of wanting our own way (all be they on a smaller scale) but we have them. They are played out in families and churches in neighbourly disputes and in the workplace.

Sometimes such behaviour comes out as bullying or intimidating, or oppressing people, other times it comes out as power struggling and it is most likely that we have all, at sometime in our lives, either inflicted or been afflicted by this oppressive mindset. And, we don't have to do very much at all to inflict or impose our rule over others...we can reject or exclude people merely by our body language, inflicting huge damage to another's sense of self worth and all because they don't see the world the way we think they should!

Once again we are seeing some very extreme examples of this my way or no way mindset in some current world leaders and we must continue to resist and to take a stance against oppressive regimens ...for this very cause we stand here today giving our grateful thanks and honouring the sacrifice of so many... yet at the same time we are also called to model peace. It's a difficult tension to hold. But if our prayers for world peace are to be answered then we each have to take responsibility for addressing that my way or no way flaw in our own soul. Gandhi put it this way

'Be the change you want to see in the world.'

This was the teaching that Jesus lived and taught us to live.

If you really want this world to know lasting peace and freedom from oppression then be that in your dealings with others.

One Christian writer who addresses this deep flaw in the human consciousness gives us the idea of the crucified mind.

The Crucified mind is in essence the opposite of the my way or no way world view.

He depicts it as

- A humble mind.
- As expressing a love that does not insist on its own way.
- As expressing a love that seeks the benefit of others
- A mind that does not bulldoze or crusade through history, culture or peoples lives demanding conformation
- A mind that is inclusive and is able to embrace diversity

It is then the very opposite of the oppressive, egocentric mindset.

So if we are truly to honour those who gave their lives for our freedom and for the hope of future peace - we must address our own inner my way or no way tendencies.

Aligning our own hearts with the qualities of peace and humility will allow Light to shine through the darkness - transforming, healing and bringing us to a glorious vision of hope.

So let us remember and honour those who died not just with our thoughts and remembrances but also with our intentions and actions so that our own lives model the message of hope that they gave their lives for.

Or to quote that wonderful verse from Micah in the Old Testament

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6.8

Hymn O God our help in ages past StF 132

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict, and ask that God may give us peace: for the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to God;

May God give peace, God give peace

for those who love them in death as in life, offering the distress of our grief and the sadness of our loss;

May God give peace God give peace

for all members of the armed forces who are in danger this day, remembering family, friends and all who pray for their safe return;
May God give peace God give peace

for civilian women, children and men whose lives are disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity;
May God give peace God give peace

for peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free;
May God give peace God give peace

for all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership, political, military and religious; asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve in the search for reconciliation and peace.
May God give peace God give peace

O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we will never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world, and grant us the grace to pray for those who wish us harm. As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and forever.
Amen.

Act of remembrance

Remembering They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them. We will remember them.

2 minutes silence

Ever -living God we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing