

14 November 2021
Remembrance Sunday

Psalm 9:9-10

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Those who know your name, trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

We meet in the presence of God.
We commit ourselves to work
in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations, that all people may, together,
live in freedom, justice and peace.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror.

We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

HYMN 132 O God, our help in ages past

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, we come this day to remember and learn - to remember the lessons of the past: the cost of war, the price of peace, the scope of human depravity, the extent of human self sacrifice.

Help us to learn those lessons - to live and work for peace, to fight only what is evil and corrupt, to serve and not to count the cost, to give our all in the cause of a better world.

Forgive us that so often and so easily we do forget. We fail to remember your sovereign transforming power, to remember you in the good times as well as the bad, to see you in the fellowship of your Church,

Almighty God,
through all things you remember us - help us to remember you! Remind us of all we owe, lest we forget. We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

Micah 4:1-5

The Mountain of the Lord

In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains;^[SEP] it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.

Many nations will come and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.^[SEP] He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths."^[SEP] The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.^[SEP] They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.^[SEP] Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree,^[SEP] and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken.

All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

HYMN 696 For the healing of the nations,

Romans 8:31-35,37-39

More Than Conquerors

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? **33** Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. **34** Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

REMEMBERING

(as close to 11:00 a.m. as you can).

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.

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.

John 15:9-17

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

SERMON

John 15:17 “This is my Command: Love each other”

I grew up with a brother and sister, both younger. I was fairly obedient, I would like to get things right. My brother was different. He would choose what he wanted to do, he worked out if he made people laugh, or if he was silly, he could get away with most things. My sister was shrewd, she watched, saw what worked, and then she could get away with things because she knew how to play the game. Somehow she always ‘needed’ to go to the toilet, just as we had to do the washing up, so my brother and I ended up having to do it.

Why am I telling you this? Well it’s about obedience. I didn’t always get it right, but generally I tried to. There is an exception, of course. I deliberately disobeyed a new rule at school, and I went to play tennis with a friend in the girls quadrangle, because there was no where else to play. It didn’t take long to get found out, and I got the cane from the headmaster. A poor choice of being disobedient, and I learnt my lesson.

Well, what might you ask, has playing tennis and getting into trouble, got to do with Remembrance Sunday? Well it’s about obedience. This human behaviour, in its proper place can be very powerful, or it can be a weakness. Choosing when and where to be obedient is key.

Today, we bear witness, and give thanks to, those who were obedient, even to the point of death, under the most exacting and difficult circumstances. Their obedience in protecting the value of freedom, often cost the sacrifice of their own lives. For that we shall be forever thankful. They might not have known of Christ's statement in v.13, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends", but they did this for our sakes. Obedience, even when it tragically cost them their lives.

There are times when it is correct to be disobedient. For example, when being told to do things by bad people, including recently, bad police officers, or more often in some countries, corrupt officials, or leaders, or organisations. Sometimes it is about challenging the status quo, when it is the norm. At the moment we have a significant life threatening problem, which is the climate emergency. Being wise, and using wisdom, to do the right thing, and ultimately being the most loving, my require us in being disobedient. We might have to say NO, at times, when we would rather comply, and be obedient.

To move back to the readings, we all long for the day, "The last days", in Micah, when God's law will be established universally, when peoples and nations everywhere will, "Beat their swords into ploughshares and spears into running hooks". Then they will have, "no need to train for war".

Until that time, we have to accept the fullness of God's love, which is to be found in Jesus Christ. As the apostle Paul assures us, "nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ".

Doing the right thing, is often a complex moral decision, but if we are led by the example of Jesus, then we can "Love each other, as He has loved us". Jesus gives us this instruction as a command. Obedience in its highest form, *is* required.

Today we bear witness to, and give thanks for, those who have done this, with the greatest personal sacrifice, in so many different and difficult circumstances. Some of which have, "laid down their lives, for their friends", and though they weren't aware of it others as well, (including naughty school boys). The price of freedom can be very dear.

Today Jesus, we pledge our obedience to your command, that we "Love each other". To the Glory of God, in the power of the Spirit. *Amen.*

HYMN 707 Make me a channel of your peace.

PRAYING TOGETHER

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 for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

HYMN 503 Love Divine, all loves excelling,

The Blessing.