



Remembrance Sunday Worship, 8 November, 2020 for Tamworth Baptist Church

Revd David Grainger

Opening Sentence: 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)

Hymn

O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home;
Under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defence is sure.
Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.
A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.
Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away,
they fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.
O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while troubles last and our eternal home.

Solemn Declaration

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

Prayer

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, the Prince of Peace.

The 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

Bible Reading

Psalm 46 – from *The Message*, Eugene Peterson

¹⁻³ God is a safe place to hide,
ready to help when we need him.
We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom,
courageous in sea storm and earthquake,
Before the rush and roar of oceans,
the tremors that shift mountains.
Jacob-wrestling God fights for us,
GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.

⁴⁻⁶ River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city,
this sacred haunt of the Most High.
God lives here, the streets are safe,
God at your service from crack of dawn.
Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten,
but Earth does anything he says.

⁷ Jacob-wrestling God fights for us,
GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.

⁸⁻¹⁰ Attention, all! See the marvels of GOD!
He plants flowers and trees all over the earth,
Bans war from pole to pole,
breaks all the weapons across his knee.
"Step out of the traffic! Take a long,
loving look at me, your High God,
above politics, above everything."

¹¹ Jacob-wrestling God fights for us,
GOD-of-Angel-Armies protects us.

Reflection

It has been said that we are the sum of our memories, and today we bring our own ones. Some bring remembrance of active service. Many will think of loved ones, including folk they have loved and lost. Some will recall civilian life during hard times of war. Still others will be renewing their life-long commitment to peace and their work for it.

Each of us brings our own memories and thoughts to this act of remembrance, which helps to make it more comprehensive. We recall that on 8th May this year, we marked the 75th anniversary of VE Day, celebrating the end of the war in Europe – followed eventually by the end of the war with Japan. Sadly, although we have not had the outbreak of global war, we have still lived under the fear of nuclear war, and there has been a host of other conflicts, large and small. Tragically terrorist threats remain. And even as we pause to remember this morning, the threat of the corona virus is growing, and faced with an awesome death rate of it, and the economic threat of attempting to keep it down, we might be tempted to forget other issues, and allow our memories to fade into the background. But in observing this day, we make the conscious and concentrated effort to remember, in a very special way. We focus on the unfolding promise of God, who has said, *I will never leave you or forsake you*, in other words, *I will always remember you – bringing you to mind and heart*. Indeed, although we are saddened to hear of folk who lose their capacity to remember and to relate, God always remembers us, all the way into eternity. In instantly recognisable phrases, Isaiah 49:15 – 16 says: ‘Can a mother forget her baby at her breast...? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;’

In summary, today is a moment to concentrate our minds, to focus our emotions and to reach out to the Lord to help. It is a moment in which, to quote the Kohima Epitaph, ‘When you go home tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today’. Recently Donald Trump derided folk who had fallen in wars saying they were “losers and suckers”. That is an appalling attitude, and today we can show just how much we disagree with him.

So what do we commemorate today? We are not trying to support the cruelty or agony of warfare or terrorism. On this day we remember the people of whatever country, who have died in the pursuit of freedom and good. We give thanks to God for their lives given for the freedom of many countries in the world. We solemnly and publicly acknowledge and declare before God that countless people have given their lives for us, for our freedom and for others and their freedom. We pray for all who suffer as the result of war. We are challenged to cherish three things. First, the memory all those who have fallen, who gave their today for our tomorrow. Second, the relative peace which we have experienced most of our lives. Third, the gospel of the good news of the saving and enabling grace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whom we rejoice and for whom we joyfully toil.

Prayers of Intercession

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

may God give peace. All: **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. All: **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. All: **God give peace.**

For civilian women, children and men who live a life disfigured by war or terror, calling to mind in penitence the anger and hatreds of humanity; may God give peace. All: **God give peace.**

For peacemakers and peacekeepers, who seek to keep this world secure and free; may God give peace. All: **God give peace.**

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

And at this time of increasing fear and uncertainty because of the lockdown and the growing threat of the coronavirus, in our country and around the world, help us as we pause to remember the victims of this pandemic, especially the ones we know personally (feel free to mention names here). And as we do so, help us to lift up our eyes above the torment of a broken world, and grant us the grace to continue praying for those who work hard to keep us safe and well in the midst of this crisis. We also remember our friends who are not well (feel free to mention their names here).

And as we honour the past, we put our faith and hope in you O Lord, for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. Amen.

An Act of Commitment – let us commit ourselves to responsible living and faithful service.

Will you strive for all that makes for peace? **We will.**

Will you seek to heal the wounds of war? **We will.**

Will you work for a just future for all humanity? **We will.**

Merciful God, we offer to you the fears in us that have not yet been cast out by love: may we accept the hope you have placed in the hearts of all people, and live lives of justice, courage and mercy; through Jesus Christ and risen redeemer. Amen

God grant to the living, grace, to the departed rest, to our rulers and all people. Unity, peace and concord, and to us, and to all God's servants, life everlasting, and the blessing of God almighty, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always, Amen.