

Worship at Home for Sunday 10 November 2024

Welcome to this act of Worship at Home which focusses on Remembrance Sunday. I am using a resource from the Methodist Church for Remembrance 2023, much of which came from Methodist Armed Forces chaplains. My reflection is borrowed from a talk by Vaughan Roberts who used the pieces of a poppy to illustrate to young people some of what Remembrance Sunday is about.

Let us pray:

O God of truth and life, during these turbulent times – with violence and loss once again at the forefront of world affairs – help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world. As together we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life, health and hope, now and forever. God of peace, We pray for all who suffer as a result of conflict; for the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered by and known to you. Amen

Reading

Our reading is taken from Isaiah Chapter 41, verses 28-31: *'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'*

And some lines from the poem 'For the fallen' by Laurence Binyon:

'They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

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.'

Reflection

Have you ever had a poppy fall apart into pieces? The parts of a poppy can help us to understand something of the importance of Remembrance. The black carpel can remind us that wars often start because of the darkness within us: human greed, the desire for power, injustice and revenge. The red petals can help us to think of the blood spilt in war-time, of pain and anguish. The leaf of a poppy can remind us that leaves fall in the autumn and can demonstrate how fragile human life is. Life can be blown away as easily as the wind blows a leaf off a tree and down to the ground. Then we are left with a bare stalk which can help us to remember that war is not just about great armies and powerful weapons. More importantly, it is about individuals who gave their lives to try and stop the wrongs of others; men and women who fought for freedom of others.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "I am a man of peace. I believe in peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that you find in stone; I do not want the peace that you find in the grave; but I do want the peace which you find embedded in the human breast, which is exposed to the arrows of the whole world, but which is protected from all harm by the power of almighty God." If you have one, look at your poppy today and see it as a whole, reminding us that God's love is more powerful than any evil in the world. Jesus's blood shed on the cross shows us that there is nowhere that God's love cannot reach out to us.

Unlike a poppy which will fall to the ground, wither, and decay, God's love for us and our love for

all those we remember today will not fall, wither or decay. Love will endure. As we remember, may compassion surround us as does God's love for us all.

A prayer for reconciliation:

As one family, we reflect today on the horrors of the past that continue to haunt humanity and darken our world. Lord, where pain still overwhelms, bring healing. Where hearts are still breaking, bring comfort. Where peoples are still oppressed, bring liberation. Where communities are still victimised, bring justice. Where children are still brutalised, bring compassion. Where lives are still crushed, bring hope. Where evil is perpetrated, bring repentance. Where war still devastates, bring peace. But most of all, wherever a single voice cries out in the darkness, bring us to one another, in the name of the love you bear in your heart for all people, all nations and all creation. **Amen**

Our hymn can be found at number 455 in Singing the Faith: 'All my hope on God is founded'

1.All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2.Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3.God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore

4.Daily doth the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5.Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Let us pray:

God, you have taught us, through your Son, that we should love one another; that no one has greater love than to lay down their life for their friends. We remember with gratitude those who have done this, and those who continue to risk their lives for the good of others. May their decision and sacrifice never be in vain. Let us pray for all those who suffer as a result of war; for the injured and the disabled, the mentally distressed, and for those whose faith in God and in humanity has been weakened or destroyed. Almighty God, infinite in wisdom, love and power, have compassion on those for whom we pray; help us to learn from all the suffering of humanity, through him who gave himself for us on the cross – Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and Saviour.

Finally, a blessing: may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always. Remember that you are precious in the eyes of God and loved by your Lord every single day. **Amen**

Paula Littlewood