

Christ Church, Ipswich

Sunday 14th November 2021

Remembrance Sunday Worship

Hello, I hope you are well. Our worship service this morning includes our Act of Remembrance. If starting around 10.45, our service will help move us towards the two minutes silence at 11 am. If you are worshipping at home today, you may well wish to use the television or the radio to mark the silence along with many other people across the UK. This Sunday, the Lectionary brings before us Daniel 12:1-3, Psalm 16 and Mark 13:1-8. We will reflect on how God remains our help and our hope even in the most difficult of times. Let us worship God together this Remembrance Sunday:

Call to worship

Gracious God,
we heard you even in the sea of disorder
and the darkness of the void,
crying, 'Light and life become!'
And all creation was begun.

We gather to praise you.

Redeeming God,
we heard you even in the sins of destruction
and the night-time of sadness,
crying, 'Enough! Here is my Son:
love and hope for the future!'

We gather to praise you.

Inspiring God,
we heard you even in the silence of sorrow
and the anguish of pain,
crying, 'If God be for us,
who can be against us!'

We gather to praise you.

R&S 705 Our God, our help in ages past

1 Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame;
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all our years away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) altd. based on Psalm 90:1-6

A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving – The Price of Freedom

Sovereign God,
We praise you today for the freedom we enjoy
as a nation and as individuals –
freedom of speech and expression,
freedom from war and oppression –
a freedom secured at such enormous human cost.
For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.

We praise you for those who made such freedom possible,
the countless thousands who sacrificed life and limb
in two World Wars
and in subsequent conflicts,
leaving homes and loved ones, often to return no more.
For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.

We praise you for all who have fought against tyranny,
hatred and evil,
prepared to sacrifice everything
rather than allow such forces to hold sway;
and we salute their courage shown in the face of danger,
their dedication to duty,
their determination to battle on against all odds.
For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.

We praise you for the peace we enjoy today –
a peace which we need to treasure constantly,
nurture carefully
and safeguard always,
recognising the price at which it was won.
For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.

We praise you for those today who fight
for international freedom and justice,
members of our own armed forces currently serving around the world,
members of UN peacekeeping forces in places of continuing tension,
striving to maintain democracy,
to keep rival factions apart,
to protect innocent civilians,
and to pave the way for a lasting end to hostilities.
For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.

Sovereign God,
we praise you today for the freedom we enjoy,
and we pray that the day will come
when there will be no more war,
when the nations of our world will live in harmony,
and when you will rule over all.
Until that time, help us to learn the lessons of the past,
to remember its sacrifices,
and to work as far as we are able for peace.

For all we owe to so many,
receive our thanks.
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession – Living as Peacemakers

Loving God,
 we are reminded today of how easy it is to speak of peace,
 and how difficult it is to pursue it;
 how straight forward it sounds to talk of breaking down barriers,
 yet how demanding it is to actually live as peacemakers.
 Yet we are reminded also that this is what you want us to do –
 to live in such a way that we heal wounds rather than create them,
 that we unite rather than divide, that we reconcile rather than separate.
 For our share in the worlds continuing pain,
Lord, forgive us.

We confess the things within us which make for conflict,
 pride, greed, envy, intolerance, a nursing of petty grievances,
 our unwillingness to forgive,
 our preoccupation with self and our lack of time for others –
 so much that we are as guilty of as any other.
 For our share in the world's continuing pain,
Lord, forgive us.

Rescue us from all that keeps us apart,
 and put a new spirit within us –
 a spirit of love and openness,
 acceptance and understanding,
 healing and reconciliation.
 May the peace we pray for begin here and now in our hearts,
 and so may we be instruments of your peace,
 bringing healing to our broken world and harmony between nations.
 For our share in the worlds continuing pain,
Lord, forgive us.

In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

Remembering

Friends, let us remember in silence before God,
 all those who have died in war.

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.

The two minutes' silence

We pray:
 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

The 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 within 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 our risen Redeemer.

Amen.

A prayer with our children before they go to Junior Church.

R&S 620 For the healing of the nations

1 For the healing of the nations,
 Lord, we pray with one accord;
 for a just and equal sharing
 of the things that earth affords.
 To a life of love in action
 help us rise and pledge our word.

2 Lead us, Father, into freedom;
 from despair your world release,
 that, redeemed from war and hatred,
 all may come and go in peace
 Show us how through care and goodness
 fear will die and hope increase.

3 All that kills abundant living,
 let it from the earth be banned:
 pride of status, race or schooling,
 dogmas that obscure your plan.
 In our common quest for justice
 may we hallow life's brief span.

4 You, Creator-God, have written
 your great name on humankind;
 for our growing in your likeness
 bring the life of Christ to mind;
 that by our response and service
 earth its destiny may find.

OT Reading: Daniel 12:1-3*The Resurrection of the Dead*

12 'At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. ² Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Psalm Reading Psalm 16*Song of Trust and Security in God**A Miktam of David*

¹ Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.'

³ As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.

⁴ Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;
their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.

⁵ The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

I have a goodly heritage.

⁷ I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

⁸ I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.

¹⁰ For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

¹¹ You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Gospel Reading Mark 13:1-8*The Destruction of the Temple Foretold*

13 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' ² Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

³ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' ⁵ Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Reflection

Had we also heard from Hebrews this morning, we would have noticed that all four of this week's lectionary readings speak to us of the hope that is to be found in God when going through challenging and distressing times. We heard the psalmist rejoicing in the 'path of life' that the Lord reveals, and in Hebrews 10, the writer speaks of Jesus as a 'new and living way' (10:20) through which forgiveness and hope are found. This new way brings assurance (10:22) and enables those who follow it to 'hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering for he who has promised is faithful' (10:23). So, there is hope! The people are then exhorted to meet together, to encourage each other and 'to provoke one another to love and good deeds' (10:24). As we know, this speaks very much of the pathway of Christian discipleship.

We heard from Daniel. The first half of Daniel tells the stories of Daniel and his friends; they were young Jewish exiles in Babylon in the sixth century BC who had a reputation for interpreting dreams and mysterious writings. Their wisdom came from their loyalty to Israel's God. They refuse to recognise the pretentious claims of foreign kings, and God rewards them by rescuing them from the deadly consequences of their bold and defiant faithfulness to God. (I suspect that we might have heard of stories about lion's dens and fiery furnaces!) The second half of Daniel comprises of a series of visions revealed to Daniel. The symbolism within these visions is far more focused towards the future rather than Daniel's time. Most Bible

scholars conclude that they were addressing the crisis faced by the author's community, living around 180 BC when they were under the harsh, oppressive rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, a reign that provoked the Maccabean revolt. Daniel offers a message of hope. Daniel and his friends are role models of faithful witness during a time of great trial. Those who follow their example can be confident that despite all appearances to the contrary, the last word belongs to Israel's God and not a foreign ruler.

This week's passage from Daniel 12 is rich in symbolism. The developing belief in angels, with Michael as Israel's heavenly protector, draws heavenly and earthly concerns together. The image of a book in which the names of faithful Israelites are written – found in the opening vision (Daniel 7.10), declares that God's faithful ones are remembered. Even though they might have lost their lives in the 'time of anguish' under Antiochus (12:1), God will judge them favourably. We notice the symbolism of hope in verses 2 and 3:

² Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

'Dust of the earth' that ends up shining like the stars juxtaposes images of humiliation and triumph, death and glory. These symbols are powerful and they serve the crushed community well as they inspire the imagination of a faith that is wonderfully nourished by the faithfulness of God. The divine promise is that the people will be delivered. So, there is hope. We also find here some of the earliest references to a personal resurrection in the Old Testament. In fact, Daniel 12:2 has the only clear expression of a belief in resurrection to be found in the Hebrew Bible. Of course, this is a belief that will develop significantly in the following two centuries leading up to the time of Jesus. Here, this personal resurrection presents a potent message: even in the most extreme and difficult of times, there is hope.

Psalm 16, which is one of David's psalms, is a psalm of confidence, although it is not clear in the original Hebrew whether this is confidence in the middle of a crisis, or as a result of deliverance from a crisis. The psalm is called a '*miktam*'. Now I'm sure we'd all love to know what a what '*miktam*' is(!) but unfortunately, the meaning of the word is obscure. It may be related to 'inscription' or 'engraving', which would then suggest that it was written after the writer had come through a crisis. Of course, whatever the word meant, the faith-inspiring power of the psalm is clear. We find here an assured confidence in the Lord who provides the means of sustenance and celebration (16:5), who gives wise counsel and life-giving instruction (16:7) and gladness and security (16:9). And through all this, a path of life emerges (16:11). So, there is hope!

*¹¹ You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.*

And lastly, we think about our Gospel reading from Mark 13. We hear that in response to a disciple's admiration of the Temple, Jesus predicts its complete destruction. He warns his followers against the attractions of leaders who make empty promises. And rather than be overwhelmed by what must take place, Mark's readers are told not to be alarmed because just as joy comes following the pain of childbirth, these earthly pains hold the promise of God's kingdom to come.

This shocking passage is part of what is called the 'Little Apocalypse' of Mark 13 where Jesus speaks of the future end of the world which will only be fully fulfilled outside of the Gospel narrative. Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple would have been deeply disturbing to those who heard his words, given the enormous significance of the building. For the Jewish people it was synonymous with their identity and the Temple acted as a powerful sign of God's enduring presence among them. For many Jews, the destruction of the Temple would have felt like the end of the world. Of course, we recognise that it was important to Jesus too. Jesus had been dedicated to the Lord there as a baby. He valued it as a place of learning, a place of prayer for all people and a place where people could express their devotion (and we saw this in last week's reading from Mark). So, it's important to note that Jesus would have had no pleasure in predicting the Temple's destruction.

Mark certainly appears to be writing in 'apocalyptic mode' although he does not follow the usual apocalyptic pattern where symbolic visions are interpreted by a heavenly revealer. More certainly, the tone and content of the conversation that follows is not the sort that is usually associated with the graphic and often gruesome imagery that's found in apocalyptic writings. As Mark tells his story, after the public declaration of coming destruction, Jesus then has a private conversation with those he is closest to, Peter, James, John and Andrew. Mark has used this public/private literary pattern frequently throughout his Gospel and really, this helps to keep the focus on discipleship. In the private conversation, the tone is one of caution ('*beware*', 13:5) and reassurance ('*do not be alarmed*', 13:7). Yes, there will be traumatic times, but these are the beginning of the birth pangs of the age and kingdom to come. So, there is hope. God's will will be done and his kingdom will come.

As those who seek to closely follow Jesus today, we may wish to consider where in today's readings we can find God's reassurance. Sadly, we know all too well that sometimes it is hard to find a path through challenging times, to find '*the path of life*', and that we often stumble in the face of real difficulty. Perhaps it is helpful to be reminded that what we are going through has almost certainly been experienced in some way before, and that there is much wisdom available from those who have gone before us that can sustain us until the path re-emerges and the light appears once more. And this is true whether we are listening to the Psalmist, Prophet, early church leader in a letter or Gospel writer or to other wise historical voices from within our tradition or to trusted contemporary companions who help support us and sustain us as we walk in the way of Jesus. So, there is hope. Through this, over all this, I pray that we will always sense God's reassuring and loving presence in our lives, especially when we are going through tough and testing times. As Matthew's Jesus says right at the end of his Gospel, '*and remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*' (Matthew 28:20). Amen.

A moment for reflection as we listen to some music

R&S 586 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 is builded,
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.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) altd.
* based on Joachim Neander (1650-80)

Our prayers of intercession

As the year turns and darkness casts its shadows
keep us firm in the hope of light to come.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

As we remember the people who gave their lives for the freedom of others
and their sacrifices on behalf of future generations,
may we live by their example of duty and courage.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

As we face the wounds of history,
reflecting together on the pain caused by war and conflict
and the scars of mistrust and aggression.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

We remember all who long for freedom and peace, remembering today:
Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe unjustly detained in Iran;
women terrified by domestic violence;
migrants risking everything in search of a better life,
especially those in desperate circumstances at the Poland-Belarus border
and we ask for a swift and just solution to this crisis.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

As the world heads for catastrophic temperature increases
and people shut their ears to the truth
we pray for life-changing courage to act.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

We stand together with countries on the frontline of global heating
remembering today the peoples of the Pacific Islands
who are afraid of being swallowed by the rising sea.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

We pray for areas of conflict, remembering Myanmar, Sudan and Nigeria.
We pray for peace in all the pain of our broken and troubled world
and for faithful peace-building.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

When trust in politics and politicians has been shaken by sleaze and scandal
and leaders do not serve the people,
keep us mindful of your servant kingship.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

When many voices compete for our attention;
when we are tempted by easy answers to complex problems
and we are afraid of the cost of following you:

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

When we watch the suffering of those we love
and long for their healing and release
send your Spirit's presence to comfort all who are in pain.

We think especially of those who are grieving, those who are struggling and those who are sick.
We pray for Stephen Hogger, Ellen Naunton, Margaret Widdowson, Janet Wilson, Bill and Irene Gale, Betty
and Brian Clarke and their family, and Netty Waters.

A moment of quiet

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

As we travel in the company of the saints
and with the memory of all whose faith has inspired our own
we give thanks that we do not travel alone.

Show us the pathway that leads to life,
for you are our God
Defend us, O Lord.

God of love, hear all these our prayers,
in the name of Jesus, our Rock and Redeemer. **Amen.**

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.
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.**

R&S 345 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand:
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore;
feed me now and evermore.

2 Open thou the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams, Pantycelyn (1717-91)
v. 1 tr. Peter Williams (1722-96) altd.
vv. 2-3 tr. William Williams (or John Williams, 1754-1828) altd.

A sending out prayer

Lord God, source of all love,
from whom every soul has come,
and to whom every soul will return,
help us to hold close the stories of those
who have gone before us,
and to take comfort from their wisdom.
Let their stories tint our daily life with colour,
and give us hope and light to our path. **Amen.**

The Blessing

God, grant to the living grace,
to the departed rest,
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth
and all people,
unity, peace and concord,
and to us and all God's servants,
life everlasting.

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, for evermore. Amen.**