



When You Go Home,
Tell Them Of Us And Say,
'For Your Tomorrow,
We Gave Our Today.'

08 November, 2020

Please click on the type in RED to hear the music/song

PRELUDE TO WORSHIP

Karl Jenkins - " THE ARMED MAN " Sanctus

[Quiet worship]

Call to Worship

Gracious God, on this day closest to Remembrance Day, we pause to remember those who have died because of wars and violence. Still our hearts and minds now and, **"We will remember them"**.

Hymn: Healing our Nation

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we gather to remember, with our individual and collective memories, some painful and difficult, some with pride of sacrifice. We gather with our limited understanding of wars past and present, but we are here to remember those who have died in wars, and we come to give thanks for the gift of life. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading

Matthew 25:1-13

“The kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. The wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. At midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ All virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ The wise replied, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ While they were going to buy, the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready, went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. The other virgins arrived later, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ He answered, ‘I say honestly to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

A Reflection

A Nigerian proverb says, *“The spider that knows what it will gain, sits waiting patiently in its web”*.

Jesus invites us to consider what it means to WAIT’, to think about what we need while waiting, and what we will gain by waiting patiently.

The core message of Jesus’ parable of the ten bridesmaids is, *“be ready”*; you don’t know whether the wait is long or short.

All over the world, weddings follow a similar pattern. In some cultures, people wait for the Bride and she arrives to the tune of, *Here comes the Bride!*

In other cultures, family and friends wait for the Bridegroom’s arrival, when a band strikes up and he is ushered into the wedding ceremony with much fanfare.

This parable reminds us, we are all on the same journey; we all are waiting expectantly for our bridegroom, the Christ, to arrive in such majesty, the human mind has never ever imagined.

We all have one responsibility, to make sure we are ready for the arrival of the Bridegroom, and prepared to join Him into the Father's celebration feast.

Jesus cautions us, the bridegroom was *a long time coming*.

God's timing and our sense of time are not the same. God lives outside time, something we neither appreciate nor understand.

Unable to appreciate the Bridegroom's delay, the wait made all 10 bridesmaids weary and tired; they became drowsy and fell asleep.

Many of us have experienced long periods of waiting, waiting on God, praying and asking God for help, but '*he is a long time coming*'.

Waiting can be tiresome, and some of us are extremely tired. We want God's intervention NOW, to come and sort things out for us; things need sorting out in our lives, our homes, business, relationships, jobs, in the nation and the world.

Among the 10 Bridesmaids, five were ready for a long wait; they carried extra oil with them. Jesus refers to them as "wise", and here is the lesson:

To be "**wise**", is to have the wisdom of God. The "wise" learn and know how to wait on God. He gives them His wisdom to do what is right, to learn how to wait

To be "**foolish**" is to ignore the value of God's wisdom, to presume we know all the answers: our planning is adequate; we will do what is necessary when the time arrives; people are generous and kind-hearted and will always help in times of need.

It is an understatement to say we live in strange, unprecedented and unchartered times. Everyone, from the the most intelligent Doctors and scientists to those who govern at all levels, all are trying their best to understand the nature, character and behaviour of this virus.

One day, this year in our lives will become a thing of the past. We will look back on this year with 2020 vision!

In the meantime, we are getting restless. How long can we wait to return to total freedom and normality, if we can remember what normality was? How long can we wait for God's healing and deliverance?

Isaiah the prophet encouraged us with these words, *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.*

John Wesley, the Methodist Minister and reformer was asked what he would do if he knew his Lord would return at that time the next day. His reply, *I would go to bed and go to sleep; wake up in the morning, and go on with my work, for I would want Him to find me doing what he had appointed.*

Let's learn to wait with preparedness, drawing on God's wisdom through the work of the Holy Spirit, as the bridegroom of the Church arrives as the Healer, Deliverer and Saviour.

Thoughts for Reflection:

- Remember when you had to wait patiently? How did you feel?
- How can you use this Coronavirus 'waiting time' to be prepared?
- What is it that you can do in your community, family or neighbourhood, whilst waiting?

Prayers of Intercession

As we pray today I invite you to use your poppy, either by detaching it or holding it where it is. If you don't have a poppy with you, please picture one in your mind.

Pray.

First, hold one of the petals of the poppy and pray, *Father, this red petal reminds me of the blood shed by so many in the wars throughout history. In the last century, members of our family, and may either families were directly involved in war, some in various armed forces, some in auxiliary services. We remember those who live with injury, trauma, death, courage, fear, whose lives are changed forever. We thank you for so many who were prepared to pay the highest price of all*

Now, hold another petal on your poppy, remembering before God the violence and warfare of our own times. *We pray, Father, give us politicians and military leaders equal to the huge tasks they face – wise in judgement, calm in spirit, respecters of life, eager to seek peace.*

Now, touch the centre of the poppy, where seeds are stored, ready for new life. *Lord, take the seeds of peace which lie in the hearts of your people everywhere, and cast them generously over every continent and nation. Let those seeds germinate, grow and flourish.*

Now, hold the green leaf (or the green stem) and remember the growing hope which comes from faith alone, faith in God for whom everything is possible, even in the darkest hour. *May hope guide our politics, our nation, our thinking and our lives. May hope draw us ever nearer to that day when the world shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.*

Finally, *Father! Give us the resolve and the courage to beat our swords into plough-shares, our spears into pruning hooks, our weapons of mass destruction into technologies for peaceful living, and inform our minds and season our hearts to think and speak of the love of Christ, the One who for our "tomorrow", gave His "today".*

By Your grace, teach us to listen and hear
By Your mercy, forgive our foolish ways
By Your power, restrain the men of war
By Your justice, save the innocent
By Your love, hear us we pray. **AMEN.**

Hymn 515 Abide with me

Blessing

May the God who mourns with his people,
the Son who sacrificed his own life
that you might experience the depths of God's love,
and the Holy Spirit whose presence never leaves you,
bless you all today, tomorrow and forever.

AMEN.

Karl Jenkins' " THE ARMED MAN " - Benedictus