

Remembrance Sunday - John 15 v 13

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[0 : 00] If you could have John 15 open, please. It's done to you, if you're able to. In my mind, I had actually moved on somewhat from John 15.

I was beginning to think about John 16, but then, as I began to study at the beginning of this week, and thought about the fact that this is Remembrance Sunday, on reflection, it just seemed remiss to move into John 16 without lingering for a wee bit longer in John 15.

And I want to give thought this morning to one particular verse, and take a text rather than move through a chapter as I more normally do.

And the verse I'd like to take as a text this morning is verse 13, and we read it with the children, and we see it before us just now. Jesus' words, he says, Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. And today, on Remembrance Sunday in particular, we remember friends.

[1 : 32] We see it on social media, we've seen it much in the course of the week, there's the poppies, lest we forget. And we don't forget, we remember all that has been done.

We remember friends. There's some of you who are here today, and you're able firsthand to remember friends that you were close with, who in their youth lost their lives, gave their lives for our freedom.

And there's many more of us here, and we didn't know these people. We stand at the War Memorial, we look at these names, we read the names on the list, we didn't know these people. I read names yesterday, I didn't recognise the names. I can't picture their faces, but still those who went to war, those who fought in that cause, those who have enabled us to enjoy something of the freedom that we enjoy today.

As we remember them, even though we may not have known them, we remember them, and we consider them to be friends. Greater love has no one of this than he laid down his life for his friends.

[2 : 56] Sometimes it's difficult to know who is a friend. We have to be discerning, and we have to be wise sometimes, as we consider who we would have as friends.

Some of you are on Facebook. Many of you won't be. You're the privileged people. For those who are on Facebook, Facebook, for those who don't know, it's essentially an online community. It's people, not real people, but behind them, sometimes, is a real person. But the lives that are presented are never real lives, let me say that. But the Facebook, it's an online community, and you join that community, and on that community, you connect with your friends.

So there's people who you know, and you recognise, and you see them on the online community, and you'll connect with them. You'll ask to be their friend, and they'll accept that request sometimes. Sometimes they'll ignore it, hoping it'll go away. And then, there are other people, who may approach you, and they want to be your friend. And so, on your Facebook screen, you'll see a notification, a wee red thing that'll come up.

[4 : 07] And you click on the notification, and it'll say, you've been sent a friend request. So you check that friend request, you check the name, to see, do I know this name?

You don't recognise the name, you'll then check the profile, to see, is this some face that I recognise? Is this somebody from the past, that had just slipped my memory? And then, you have to make a decision.

Is this somebody? Is this person who's approaching me? Is this person, who has requested friendship? Is this somebody, that I want to be friends with? Is this someone, who has good intentions?

Or is this perhaps, some pseudo profile, this, badly motivated person, who has bad intentions, and who you would not want, to have access, to your information, or your life?

So sometimes, it's difficult to know, who is a friend? Who do we want to have, as our friends? Who do we want to give, access to, our lives, in the flesh, and even, in the, online community?

[5 : 25] I want to ask the question, this morning, how much access, do you give Jesus, to your life? it's good, that you're in church, but beyond that, how much access, do you and I, give Jesus, to your life?

Do you have a friend, in Jesus? Is he one, who is, your friend? We sometimes, sing that hymn, I found a friend, oh such a friend, who loved me, and I knew him.

He goes on, to explain the wonders, of having Christ, as a friend. What a friend, we have in Jesus, we often sing, all our sins, and these to bear.

Is Jesus, someone who is, a friend? Or is he one, that you like to keep, at a comfortable distance? Somewhat far off? Somewhat uninvolved, in the details, of your day to day life? Is he one, whom you trust, and you love, and you walk with?

[6 : 37] Or is he one, that you keep at a distance, because, essentially you don't trust him. You don't want him. To actually, come in, in his, Lordship, to your life.

John, as he writes this gospel, as the spirit leads him, he wants us, to trust Christ. He wants, us to have a friend, in Jesus.

John, as he writes this gospel, he wants us, to believe in Jesus. I've quoted it, so many times, and I'll go to it again, John chapter 20, 31. It's the purpose, that's the key, to the whole book.

That's why, John's writing these things. He says, these things are written, that you may believe, that Jesus, is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing, you may have life, in his name.

So do you believe, do you believe, do you believe, that Jesus, is the Christ, the promised one, the savior of sinners?

[7 : 42] Do you believe, that he is the son of God? And not just some man, some philosopher, some teacher, who came to the world, with some, remarkable ideas, for a season.

Do you believe, in Jesus? Why should you believe, in Jesus? Some will be sitting here, just now, with, that attitude lightly.

Why should I believe? Why should I believe, in Jesus? Why should I trust him? Why should I come to him, as a savior?

Why should I allow him, to be lord, over my life? Why would I want him, as a friend? I have many friends. Why Jesus? Well the answer, to that question, is because, he loves you, with a greater love, than this world, has ever known.

Or will ever know. How do we show love? You know, we show love, sometimes with flowers, sometimes with cards, sometimes with letters, sometimes with gifts, or gestures.

[8 : 58] That's how we show love. How did God, show his love to us? 1 John 4. This is how God, showed his love among us.

He sent his one and only son, into the world, that we might live, through him. This is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his son, as an atoning sacrifice, for our sins.

I wish that I could, I wish I could impress that on you. Only the spirit can. This becomes so familiar to us.

John Murdo, or Andrew Caller, I can't remember yesterday, one of them spoke yesterday, about how we, how we drive past the world, week on week, day on day, and there's these names there, and there's this monument, that speaks to, such a powerful sacrifice, and we don't give it a thought, perhaps.

And we can come to texts, like this. We can read these words, from 1 John 4, and they pass us by, and we drift into, a state of sleep, or we start to plan our weeks, and they don't impact us.

[10 : 15] We don't remember. We wear poppies to remember. We wear poppies to remember. We wear poppies to remember. We have been given the Lord's Supper.

Why? Because we need to remember. It's remarkable, that we would have to be instructed, to remember, such, love for us.

And yet we do. I do. I know you do. This is how God, showed his love among us.

He sent, his one and only son, into the world, that we might live through him. This is love. Not that we love God, but that he, loved us.

And sent his son, as an atoning sacrifice, for our sins. Greater love, as no one in this, that he laid down at life, for his friends.

[11 : 26] Here is love, vast as the ocean. Loving kindness, as the flood. When the prince of life, our ransom, shed for us, his precious blood, who his love, will not remember.

Who can cease, the sound's praise. He can never, be forgotten. Throughout heaven's, eternal days. Jesus.

Today, today, we remember those, who loved us, enough, to fight for our, this worldly freedom. It's right that we do.

With John 15 open, we also remember, the one, who loved us, enough, to lay down his life, and go to war, with sin, and Satan, and death, and hell, so that we could receive, eternal life, and eternal freedom.

Do you have that? Do you know that you have that, this morning? Eternal life. Do you know, if you passed, today, from time, into eternity, do you have, eternal life?

[12 : 53] I saw something, online this week, it was just a wee, wee poster, and it was used, as a metaphor, for those, who are without Christ, and happily, without Christ.

It said this, fallen, feels a lot, like flying, until you hit the ground. how many people, are falling, heedless, with great excitement, it's great, they say, look at the speed, we're going, look at all these things, I can see, and yet, there's a judgment coming, one day, we will hit the ground, one day, we will stand, before, the judgment, throne, of God, and we will be asked, did you remember, did you trust my son?

Today, with John 15 open, we remember Jesus, we remember, his death for us, in order that we will see, this greater love, and believe, and keep on believing, I have four very short observations, the bar was set high last week, you were out by 12, you might be out by five past this week, maybe 10, maybe five, four observations, four points to note, about the death, of Jesus, and the first thing, is, as we remember Jesus, as we think about this verse, the first thing, the first thing we note, is that, Jesus did not have, to die, Jesus didn't have, to die, I don't know if you've ever thought about that, Jesus didn't have, to die, we are mortified, all of us, will die physically, at some point, some of us, will live long lives, some of us, may not live long lives, unfortunately, we don't know, how long we have, here on earth, we don't know, what the number of our days is, but we do know, that there will come a day, when we die, says in Hebrews 9, 27, man is destined, to die once, and after that, to face judgment, that's the, the consequence, of our fallen state, because of sin, that infects, every one of us, there is death, the wages, of sin is death, that's what it says, in Romans 6, 23, so, we have to die, because of our state, because of our fallen, sinful state, but Jesus, on the other hand, he did not, have to die,

Jesus was immortal, Jesus was life, itself, Jesus was the, the origin, he was the source, he was the, the genesis of life, he says, I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life, and we could say, he could have come, into this world, and lived a full, and outstanding life, and had a long, and remarkable ministry, and returned to heaven, without ever experiencing death, like Elijah, and Enoch, because Jesus, was sinless, that was his perfect state, Jesus, didn't have to die, but he chose to die, you have to die, I have to die, Jesus, on the other hand, chose to die, no one took his life, from him, his life didn't slip away, beyond his control, he chose, to die, he chose, to lay down his life, why?

Because he loved us, with our greater love, greater love, as no man, on this, that he laid down, his life, for his friends, Jesus, didn't have to die, first observation, second observation, second point, is that, Jesus, came to die, now even if we, think today, about service men, and women, those who go to war, in going to war, they know the risks, they understand, that as they go, into conflict, they may die, in service, but they don't, intend to die, they don't, go that purpose, that they will die, they don't, lay down their lives, even as they go, into conflict, even when they're, on the front line, even as they're, in the, the throes of battle, they go in, with the desire, and the determination, to live, and not die, but Jesus,

[18 : 20] God the Son, the all, knowing God, the immortal, the powerful, the all, powerful God, the one who was, it says in Philippians, to, in very nature God, he did not consider, equality with God, something to be grasped, but he made himself, nothing, taking the very nature, of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found, in appearance, as a man, he humbled himself, and became, obedient, to death, even death, on a cross, Jesus did not, come, to this world, to live, and heal, and perform, miracles, he did all, these things, but that was not, the primary reason, that he came, Jesus could have, come to this world, and been a, a great blessing, in this generation, and

healed many, and done the most, amazing miracles, and gone back to heaven, and we would have, no hope,

Jesus did not, come, to live, he came, to die, and even, and even, if we just, flip back, a few verses, in John's gospel, we see, how clearly, Jesus saw his death, he predicts his death, in John 12, 27, he says, now my heart, is subtle, and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour, no, it was for, this very, reason, I came, to this hour, Jesus came, to die, knowing, that he would die, the most awful, of deaths, on a cross, that was his purpose, all things, as we see so clearly, in John's gospel, led, to that hour, to that hill, to that cross,

Jesus came, to die, today, we're not, at war, as a nation, in the, in the global sense, there are pockets of war, and so when people, go into the armed forces, they volunteer, to go in, some of you, can remember, at a time, when, the great wars, were on, and there were many, who would have, rather done anything, than fight, and yet, they were forced to fight, they had to go, they had no option, they were called up, and they had to obey, I think sometimes, we think of Jesus, in these terms, that's not true, it's not how, it worked, within the Godhead, God the Father, did not, force God the Son, to come down, to this broken world, to fix it,

God the Father, did not, call the Son up, to implement, a hastily delivered, plan B, to rescue us, from the mess, that we were in, Titus 1, 2 even, you can go there later, makes clear, that the, the salvation plan, that rested, on the death of Christ, was formulated, when?

before the beginning, of time, this was no impulse decision, before, the beginning, of time, it was agreed, that Jesus, would come, to this world, to die, so that we might live, Jesus didn't have, to save us, this was no obligation, within the Godhead, in fact, it's a mystery, by the all going God, who choose to save, such a race, of rebels, against him, but he chose to, Jesus didn't have to come, but he chose to come, and die, why?

[23 : 00] Because he loved us, with that greater love, than this world, has ever seen, Jesus didn't have to die, firstly, Jesus came to die, secondly, thirdly, Jesus didn't die, for his friends, or his country, man, Jesus, did not die, for his friends, we sometimes, will hear accounts, of those, who died, because of, the friends, that they held, so dear, and the friends, who loved them, so greatly, and that moves us, and that moves us, when we hear it, because of that, reciprocal love, there's such a strong bond, of friendship, Jesus did not die, Jesus did not die, for his friends, Jesus, Jesus didn't die, for those, who loved him,

Jesus didn't die, for those, who worshipped him, Jesus did not die, for his friends, and I want to just, make that, distinction, this morning, because, Jesus died, we can become, his friends, and we can, know him, as friends, but when, he determined, to die for us, we were not, his friends, and when, he died for us, we were not, his friends, when he died for us, we were rebels, against him, everything in us, was against him, everything in us, hated him, when he died for us, Romans 5, 8, says, while we were still, sinners, Christ died for us, Romans 5, 10, a couple of verses on, when we were, God's enemies, we were reconciled, to him, through the death, of his son, God didn't look, at you and I, and see us, in a state, of such beauty, and attractiveness, when we were, sinners, when we were, his enemies, when we were, all out, rebels, against him, when we had, nothing to give, when there was, nothing attractive, in us, as we shook, our fists at God, as we cried out, crucify him, Christ died for us, grace, and it's all grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, grace, it's the most, amazing, breathtaking, grace, when we deserve, the worst, he gave us, the best, when we deserved, death, because, of our, sin, he died, in our place, so that we might, know life, because of his, righteousness, why, because he loved us, with our, greater love, final point, Jesus didn't, have to die, Jesus, came to die, he didn't die, for his friends, he died, for his enemies, so that his enemies, could become his friends, and the final thing, is Jesus died, spiritually, our death, if we are Christians, is, a physical death, if we are Christians, we are, promised, that we, through Christ, have a hope, that goes beyond, the grave, so the death, that we will experience, will be a physical death, John 11, 25, and 26, Jesus says, I am the resurrection, and the life, he who believes in me, will live, even though he dies, physically, and whoever lives, and believes in me, will never die, spiritually, so if we are Christians, in that deep, spiritual sense, death, has lost, its spin, sin, yes, there is pain, and yes, there is trauma, and yes, we, we may fear, the actual, act, the, the physical experience, of death, but if we are Christians, death has had, the spiritual sting, removed, death has lost, its sting, not so for Jesus, think about that, not so for Jesus, he took, the sting of death, spiritual death, upon himself, and yes, he suffered physically, and he was beaten, and he was spat on, and he was mocked, and he was struck, and he was ridiculed, and he was humiliated,

and he was starved, yes, he died the most, horrific, physical death, but he also suffered, and died, spiritually, and Conway Boyce, the commentator says, spiritual death, is the separation, of the soul, and spirit, from God, this is what makes hell, such a terrible place, those in hell, are separated, from God, and because God, is the source, of all good, all joy, peace, love, and other blessings, hell is the opposite, it is misery, unrest, hate, and so on, this, is the separation, says Boyce, that Jesus, endured, for us, and this, is what prompted him, on the cross, to cry out, my God, my God, why, have you forsaken me, it's because of you, it's why he cried it, it's because of me, that's why he cried it, the separation, the spiritual death, that he, took, upon himself, was ours, why, why, why, did Jesus, willingly die, why, did he descend, into hell, as the apostles, creed says, that place of spiritual death, for us, why, because he loved us, with that greater love,

Paul prayed, in Ephesians 3, 18, that we would grasp, how wide, and long, and high, and deep, is the love of Christ, that we would know, this love, that surpasses, knowledge, and this is where, we come to see, and know, something, of the love of Christ, this is where, we grasp, how high, and wide, and long, and deep, is the love of Christ, it's as we survey, the wondrous cross, it's as we remember, that Jesus, who was loved, who was moved, by love, and not compassion, and not compulsion, willingly, and lovingly, died for us, so that we, who by nature, are God's enemies, could by grace, become God's friends, greater love, has no one in this, that he laid down, his life, for, his friends, you're a friend of Jesus, you're a friend of Jesus, you're a friend of Jesus, you get a notification, on your phone, friend request,

[32 : 23] Facebook, who is it, if you open your Bible, if you listen to the gospel message, you have a friend of Christ, the God, who loved you, because he loved you, comes to you, in Christ, and at such cost, offers his hand, of friendship, you're a friend, of Jesus, you can be, if you will confess, your sin, and acknowledge, that you need him, to be your savior, will you do that, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, our father, we thank you, for, the greater love, that we see, as we consider, the fact, that you gave your son, to die, so that we might live, our Lord Jesus, we thank you, that you, were willing, to come, knowing all, that you were coming to, we thank you, that moved by love, you laid down your life, so that we, who were enemies of God, and hopeless, could be made friends, of God, and given a hope, that is eternal, and Holy Spirit, we pray, that you would be, at work, in each of us, showing us our sin, showing us our need, and touching, our hearts, that we, might be moved, as we consider, the greater love, that Christ, showed for us, we ask Lord, that we would respond, by giving, our lives, and our all, to him, and we pray these things, in Jesus name,

Amen.