

Remembrance Sunday 2016

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Date: 13 November 2016

Preacher: Rev. John Murdo MacDonald

[0 : 00] At the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the guns fell silent on the West Wing front to bring an end to the First World War.

Our nation and commonwealth and indeed nations all over the world, I would call that moment due to armistice and remembrance of the celebration of the events. And so 98 years later, we stand here today to remember life's sacrifice in the service of our nation and also to remember those traumatised and injured and caught.

Our prayer should be that we would have such a devotion to justice and freedom that the heroism of all who fought at still time may continue to be remembered in our nation of service, that seeks and strives for peace.

Let's just be still for a short time as we remember those who have given their all but our peace. God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea. Though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

[1 : 31] There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the most high dwells. God is within her.

She will not fall. God will help her at the rate of day. Nations are in uproar. Kingdoms fall. He lifts his voice. The earth melts.

The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see the works of the Lord. The desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire. Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the air. The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress.

[2 : 30] Let's bow and it heads under hearts. God of justice and compassion, we give thanks today. As we remember all those who have served in the time of war, we give you thanks for all who went and did not count the cost so that others such as us can live today in peace and freedom and safety.

And especially on this day, we give thanks for the remembrance that we are privileged to make of those whose names are written upon war memorials here and throughout our land and throughout the world.

those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who, though still living, continue to pay the cost.

Grant us an appreciation of the liberty which their sacrifice has purchased for us.

And help us to remember them with grateful hearts. Help us to remember them so that war may one day come to an end. We rejoice, Lord, today as we worship.

We rejoice in our inheritance, both in the gospel of your grace and in the freedom and the peace in which we live. In Jesus' name we pray and give thanks.

[3 : 48] Amen. Amen. Well, let's sing together, let's say, what a pleasure and a privilege it is to be with you again. Thank you for your kind invitation to share with you in worship.

It's great to be with you. We're going to sing with him, Behold the mountain of the Lord, and after days shall rise, the mountain tops above the hills and draw the wandering eyes.

It's a very appropriate act of praise to sing. Behold the mountain of the Lord. Let's again come to God.

Let's pray. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me.

And lead me in the way everlasting. Heavenly Father, living God, search our hearts as we come to worship you and to praise you this morning. May we be able, through the striving of your Holy Spirit, to open our hearts in your presence this morning.

[4 : 59] To worship you in a way that brings glory to you. To truly know the healing power of your presence. Of the peace that passes human understanding.

Through the presence of the peace of peace, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Thank you, Heavenly Father, that we can sing these words together. Words that speak of a peace that will surely come.

Not through wars or through any other human agency. But through the one who was crucified. The one who brings and makes peace between heaven and earth.

Thank you, Father, that in Jesus Christ, our Lord, the living God has come in love and mercy. In Jesus, the light of the world to bring light into this dark and fallen world.

Or to walk with us through this life that you have given us to live. And Lord, so often as we do walk through this life. We walk in darkness. We live in a world that is much in darkness.

[6 : 07] Whether through wars and conflicts and disputes. Or through illness and through difficulties and problems. And so we thank you that Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness. But have the light of life. And we praise you, Lord, that the light of your love lights up our darkness. And gives us the comfort and the strength.

And the guidance that we need. In the way that we should go. The hymn writer says, Jesus, stand among us in your risen power.

May this time of worship be a hallowed hour. Lord God, we are aware that our sins stand between us and you.

And we'd spoil our fellowship with you and with each other this morning. And so we freely at the beginning of our worship confess these sins. Our thoughts and words and actions. Our attitudes and behaviours.

[7 : 08] In the strength of your promise that if we confess our sins. That you are holy and just. And will forgive us. For the sake of Jesus. We thank you, Lord, for the cleansing cloud of the blood of Christ.

We thank you for the freedom. And the newness of life that is given in the gospel. There is therefore now no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus. For those who are in Christ.

The old has gone. And the new has come. And we thank you, Lord, that that is where the real search for peace is found. In the cross of Jesus Christ.

With heaven's peace and perfect justice. Kiss a guilty world in love. Help us, Lord, to be made new again. Give us, Lord, we pray, willing hearts to be changed at the deepest level.

Lord, we cannot bring you perfect hearts. We do not have any such thing. But we bring you, Lord, willing hearts. Hearts that are willing to be changed at that time. Of course.

[8 : 09] Hearts that are willing to be cleansed from sin. Hearts that are willing to make a break with sin. And to turn to Jesus. Make us new again this morning. Renew us in heart and mind and spirit.

Receive us as we come into your ear of presence. Set free and made new through the blood of Christ. No condemnation awaited Jesus. And all in him is mine.

Bold I approach the eternal throne. And claim the crown of Christ. My own. Thank you, Lord, for the prayers of you people this morning.

Not just here. But across this island. And across our nation. And across this world. And even in the heavenly realms where angels. And that angels cry out.

Holy, holy, holy. It's the Lord God of hosts. We thank you that in our own imperfect way we join today. In the very worship of the angels themselves. And the cries of heaven.

[9 : 07] That cry out glory to God in the highest. We thank you, Lord, for answered prayer. We so often come and forget to thank you for the way in which you have answered prayer in our lives.

We do that this morning, Lord. We thank you for those who have been healed by your touch.

Physically and emotionally and spiritually. We thank you, Lord, for the many hearts in here that have been touched and changed by your touch.

By your grace and by your love. We thank you, Lord, again for the remembrance that we make this Sunday. For those who gave that all that we might know.

That peace and security and safety. We thank you, Lord, for the symbol of the property that reminds us. But, Lord, we thank you above all for the symbol of the cross.

Through which that eternal peace that you have purchased and purposed for your people has been won by our Lord of Syria. We pray, Lord, for our nation at this time.

[10:08] A nation that has backslidden. A nation that no longer honors and values your word and your values and your principles. A nation that tries to find meaning and purpose and safety and security in things that are man-made.

Lord, forgive us and turn us again as a nation. We grant us, Lord, a spirit of repentance. And that spirit needs to begin to start in your church, Lord Jesus.

Give us truly hearts that cry out on behalf of our nation. We remember, Lord, those in authority over us. The Queen and the Royal Family. We pray for parliaments in London and Edinburgh.

And for all those who represent us in these places. And we pray for wisdom and we pray for justice. And we pray above all for a focus on Jesus Christ.

We pray that those in authority over us would have their eyes open to see. That righteousness alone exalts a nation. And that that righteousness comes from you.

[11:12] And from you alone. And, Lord, we pray for this community here. We pray for all who are in need. We pray for those who are in poverty.

Whether spiritually or financially. We pray for those who struggle with addictions and compulsions that are more powerful than themselves. We pray for all who are sick and sorrowing and suffering. And we pray that we, as you people here, would be able to become involved in the spiritual battle that is being waged. Lord, the focus today is on wars on a human level.

But, Lord, there is a battle going on that will determine the fate of this world. And we will determine the fate of each soul and each heart that has ever lived.

And, Lord, that battle came to its climax at Calvary. Help us to see that, Lord. Help us to understand what was done there for us and for our world. May the Lord Jesus Christ lay down his life for sinners such as we are.

[12:11] Lord, speak to us today. We pray that your word would go out in its power. We pray not to hear the voice or words of any human being, but the voice of the living God.

So open our hearts and our minds now to receive what you have to say to us. Help us, Lord, to lift our eyes to Christ, the author and perfection of our faith, and to listen to his voice speaking to our hearts this morning.

Lord, we are all so different. We come here with our own different needs and cares and worries and hopes and joys too. And, Lord, we need to hear your voice.

We need to know that you are here with us. So speak to us through your word, by your Holy Spirit, we pray. Hear each heart that is open here to you this morning.

As we bring in the quietness of our own hearts, we open the gates of the psalmist days to receive the King. Help us, Lord, now to receive all that you have for us in blessing, in challenge, in review, in guidance, in encouragement.

[13:18] Lord, speak for your people and listening, your people are hearing. And we pray all things in the name and for the glory of Jesus. Amen.

Thanks, sir. We do continue to pray, especially for our nation. Prayers, if we're going to see shortly, prayers, very important.

In fact, the most important thing. It's great to see so many young folk. It's good to be with you again. I just want to say a few words with you.

I'll speak where I am here because otherwise people won't hear me. Okay. You can see I'm wearing something today on my lapel here.

What am I wearing? A poppy. A poppy. Yes. A poppy. A poppy. A poppy. Yes, thank you. In unison. That's good. A poppy. Well, I thought I would speak a bit this morning to the young folks and to the older folks who, I think, about poppy and why you wear a poppy.

[14:21] And the reason why was, a while ago, I read a story, a rather sad story, of a young boy, well, a young, a teenager, actually, who ran into a shop and he stole collection books for the poppy fund for Remembrance Sunday.

And when he was caught and questioned as to why he'd done it, he had no idea what Remembrance Sunday was. He had never heard of it. So I think it's important, maybe, that we can remind ourselves why today we remember people.

And I need some help. Okay, I need five people. You can come out with one object. That's true. I hope I've got this in right.

You can stand over there. Poppy. I'm going to help spell out the word poppy. Okay. So will you hold back there. And if you stand facing everybody, you can hold back up.

That's great. The first word left of poppy is P. Okay. And that word brings to our mind peace. We don't remember wars today.

[15 : 30] We give thanks for peace. We remember people who gave their lives to war. We're not saying war is good. War is never good. But we're remembering and giving thanks for peace.

And the second letter is O. Who wants the O? You want to stand? Come and stand there. Okay.

That's good. That's great. We'll do it this way. Offering is another word for sacrifice.

And sacrifice is when you give something. And we remember today people who've given their lives. And in various ways.

Some people have actually died in wars to protect peace. And we'll remember them. Other people are still suffering from wars and are still carrying injuries.

And again we're not saying that war is good. We are remembering and giving thanks for people who sacrificed and offered themselves. The third P in poppy is praise.

[16 : 38] Now again I have to stress we're not praising people because of war. We're not giving praise for war. We're giving praise to God for peace.

The sad thing is that today across the world there are still wars going on. And we thankfully and we praise God for this are living in a place where there is peace.

We live in places like Syria and other places. And we really can't even begin to grasp what it must be like to live in places like that. Where war is going on day after day after day.

So we praise God this morning that we live in peace. And I have somebody else who can. Who said this is one of the most if not the most important things about what we're doing today.

And that's prayer. Prayer. We pray for peace. We pray for peace across the world where there are wars. We remember these places.

[17 : 44] And we pray that God will bring peace. We pray for those who are still missing loved ones who have lost their lives in war. We pray for those who are still suffering injuries because of war.

So prayer is very important. Like I said especially to keep praying for peace. Peace is no less the prince of peace. And we'll see more about that later.

And the last, what's the last letter in the pocket? The guys good...

Everybody shout. and you're very happy. Okay, that's good.

The Y stands for you. The five words that are peace, offering, praise, prayer, and you.

[18 : 52] Now this is really important because you know that the black fit in the pocket is at the center of the heart of the pocket.

And in a couple of ways you young people are at the heart of what we're doing today and remembering those who have given so much.

The first reason why you're at the heart of it is that the folk who gave their lives had you on their hearts and in their minds when they died of people who gave their lives.

And they believed that they were doing this for us, for future generations. So you were, in a sense, at the heart of the sacrifice and the offering of the people.

But secondly, you're also at the heart of it because you will grow up if I were to come back here in 20 years, which I probably won't be able to do for various reasons, you will be 20 years older.

[19 : 57] And it will be you then who will be responsible for keeping the peace in the world. You will grow up to take over from people like like yourselves and all the grown-ups just now.

So you're at the heart of this day because the people who died have you on their hearts. And secondly, you're at the heart of it because the search for peace continues and the world is for peace.

And you're going to be at the heart of that as you grow up. So, offering, offering, praise, prayer, and you're at the heart of it.

I've got another symbol here. The pawpia is very important. But there's a more important symbol here. What's this? A cross. Absolutely.

The pawpia is very important. And we must never forget the people who have given so much for us and for our peace. We must always remember that. But there's somebody else who gave his all as well.

[20 : 59] There's somebody else. Who was it? Jesus. That's right. Jesus died on a cross. And I know something the Bible tells us that the search for peace or that the peace that the world is

looking for is not going to be found through war or through any human effort.

The peace and we're speaking about this with the grown-up saying that the search for peace is a spiritual one. And the only place where we will really find true and lasting peace, which is what we're all looking for, is through the cross of Jesus.

Because Jesus made peace between God and us by dying for our sins. and the peace. Okay? So it's important to remember the peace and the offering and the praise and the care and the fact that you are at the heart of all that happens as we remember those who gave so much.

But the really important and the most important thing is to remember Jesus because it's through the cross that we are going to know true peace. And my prayer for all of you young folk is that you will see that and find that peace for yourselves in Jesus.

So there's two symbols here, the poppy and the cross. And they're both important. Because we need to remember when we're a young boy who had no idea what remembrance of you survived.

[22 : 25] We need to remember that many people gave their lives for us to be able to live in peace. It's not saying that war is right or glorifying war or far from us. It's giving thanks to God remembering people who gave their lives.

And above all, we need to remember that God loves us and that Jesus gave his life on the cross so that we can have peace with God and with each other forever.

Thank you. I'm just wanting to do just a stupid yard just out and go through the field. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the symbol of the poppy. And we thank you as we remember those who gave so much the cause of peace and of freedom.

We remember them with love and with gratitude. And yet we remember too that the search for peace goes on and that through wars and other human efforts that peace is still so elusive.

And yet we thank you that as Paul says, we now have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. We thank you for the cross above all else. and we thank you that in Jesus we have the prince of peace.

[23 : 36] The one who brings peace to our hearts and the one who will come again and rule over an age of peace and the one who will bring peace to this world.

And we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Now what you can do if you want at your time is you can stick these on to pieces of cardboard.

I'm just being lazy here. I should have done it myself. And then you can make a coffee with the black square and the middle. Okay. When you have time you can take it to Sunday school.

And if you feel that you want to you can make a big coffee and do it. Okay. Thank you very much for your help. Thank you. Thank you. We're going to sing this is one of my favorite hymns of all kinds.

I remember learning this hymn as a young boy in church and in Sunday school. There is a green hill far away. We're outside the city hall. That's hymn 241 in the red group.

[24 : 47] There is a green hill far away. So let's sing this song. Let's now read together from God's work.

The children and the young folks can go to their Sunday school. So let's read together from a few passages in the New Testament.

My apologies to the young man who's seen the projector because like most ministers I couldn't make up my mind so I've been changing my readings at the last minute.

So try to. 1 Peter chapter 4 is the first passage and verses 1 to 11 and then we're going to read from Revelation and chapter 7.

Let's read together. And after we've read these passages we'll ask God for the peace to redeem us and pray and pray.

[25 : 49] So 1 Peter chapter 4 verses 1 to 11 Therefore since Christ suffered in his body arm yourselves also with the same attitude because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

As a result he does not live the rest of his earthly life on evil human desires but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do living in debauchery lust drunkenness orgies carousing and detestable idolatry.

They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near therefore be clear minded and self controlled so that you can pray. Above all love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins.

[27 : 13] Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks he should do it as one speaking the many words of God. If anyone serves he should do it with the strength God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. And then in Revelation chapter 7 reading from verse 9 down to the end of the chapter.

Revelation 7 reading from verse 9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation tribe people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb they were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands and they cried out in a loud voice salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb all the angels were standing round the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures they fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God saying Amen praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God forever and ever Amen Then one of the elders asked me these in white robes who are they and where did they come from I answered

Sir you know and he said these are they who have come out of the great tribulation they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb therefore they are before the throne of God and sent him day and night in his temple and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them never again will they hunger and never again will they thirst the sun will not eat upon them nor any scorching heat for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd who will lead them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes Amen and we pray that God will bless to us the reading of his word and that he would open our hearts and our minds to receive the truths and the blessings that he has for us as we look at these passages we do thank you of arrogance and can have oráz word ...

[30 : 24] ...

... .. m pada spirit agis ada Marly making up my heart and spirit .

Maudie, è neighbour... Si me bella cot gekommen cuatro... let's you On the back to our family, we have to live in our homes whereatten them by way.

In return, the family and are supported by men getting them out of the story.

You have a loud voice. it's time to wait to find Pisce. alive and suffering until utah has said another day and arins mediums and it felt THAT that there's not here that it felt really nerve and weight being things like that That only the man Chene This Dome haspro ■■■■ Pat

[33 : 43] Passions, ■■■■otalaya, Signature, codes,■■■■ and subject for requests, Passions, opportunities for resources, Passions, ■■■■■■■■■■ations, related dakimtes, Passions, êtros eiaugheds léshnidæ d Kungaufa Comes, em oa grim, no sahusst causa Passions, esST sparkas Resetis kommunikas catrast m bowl 91.

92. 96. more than that in the New York Historical Clinic. When I came to see the More History House, that was aème in chiton ni An wasn't or a little Ebola ou a quis , ,

This language species Minecraft. And by the, or Anything But other language effect, Christ 931 I had one nightclosedensions before a normal life took off, but it was a silk and gold that you were able to keep ohr, the Lord propped me at casa.

When we opened gard, our hearts did not bring torn by you have what you cover your stature support wonderful■ Those are THEY deadly in a thousand centres.

They will kill themselves if they kill themselves. Suppzalers are testimony introduced to the Traditional Woman and Theitat of Church, as they are, we should be with his owndogs, delta and death.

[37 : 44] And ■ so hyvin, heel injuries and going past the state and gu to begin to begin to think of a kinde pad in ao, and meant not to wait in the rest of the diva or thrive idiom that it and Kö■ înt S■ch to star in its distance toonos in their words .

.. I still had a chance and I loved it when I was a physicist.

My mind ■■■■■■■■■■ worked on what I thought about how was your time denganOL but it kept me baking and writinggr pada sin in my life.

There's others that couldn't nightags and stuff. and as for all, an elderly sister who already separated us in the house and then sent us to the future, we come to give our soldiers in the wilderness or to rise. M...goar sauce foram em bisognay sarovoyiismear

Anyway, here are súh komb... woman.

[40 : 14] Da subhane adnou bitrate... talk village, ...itya meo Master Gur whispering you salute the pure pathetic Number 29.

Number 29.

Amen. So we're saying two verses in Gaelic from Psalm 43.

And we can go verse 3 and verse 4. And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4.

[42 : 21] And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4.

[44 : 51] And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4. And let's turn to the passage. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 4.

And we can go verse 4. And we can go verse 5.

And then we can go verse 4. And then we can go verse 4. calendar, Remembrance Sunday, as we give thanks for those who lay down the lives of the nation, we give thanks for their sacrifice and commitment.

And as a young boy growing up in Lewis in the late 50s and early 60s, there were still reminders there of the story of World War II, and there was scarcely, I think, a family in the area that hadn't, in one way or another, been touched by the war and lost a member of the family that were still reminders of the First World War. There was an old widow called Cushtack who had lost her husband in the Islay. And there was also a man called Norman who had been shell-shocked, as they called it, in the First World War. And I still remember Norman. And I remember how he would be constantly agitated as he walked around. I remember specifically one day being fascinated as I watched him hiding behind a wall as the noise of a passing car frightened him and caught him unaware. And I remember feeling a little frightened of him and also intrigued by this man. And he died while I was still a young boy. And it was when

[46 : 48] I grew up that I realised what a sacrifice Norman had made. Since the end of the war in 1918, 1918, from the time that he died in the early 60s, he was really unable to work or to function normally. In one sense, by 1918 his life was effectively over. Although he lived the next 40 years, it was in some kind of awful nightmare that very few, if anybody, could enter. And although he survived the war in one sense, he really gave his life in another, he really did lose his life and gave his life. But many still live bearing the scars of war. And we must never forget that these people too have given, in a sense, their lives and their future for our peace. Greater love, says Jesus, has no one than this that he lays down his life for his friends. We must never forget that these people have given their lives and their future for our peace.

Greater love, says Jesus, has no one than this that he lays down his life for his friends. We must never forget what others have sacrificed for our freedom. Now, there are those who consider, and who have said to me over the years that what we're doing today is glorifying war. Many protest that by continuing to hold remembrance, the parades of services, that we're in a way glamorizing or holding on to some glory in war. Nothing could be further from the truth. As far as I'm concerned, I understand what people are saying.

War is never glorious. War is horrifying. War is an absolute another tragedy. And just to focus on that fact, one soldier from the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own Highlander, who survived the Battle of Kahina Ridge in Burma in 1944, wrote of the conditions in which they fought.

War is an absolute and the war. He said this, He said this, the scene created such a gruesome picture that it would have made hell of God attractive. As we made ground and moved on, we handed out positions over to Indian troops. Their uniforms were clean and tidy and their equipment

and weapons shining as new. We were like thramps, unwashed, unshaven, in fact bearded with mud all over our bodies. Much to my surprise, these new troops, looked at us, visibly trembling with horror. They got into our foxholes without seeing anything. But we knew from the look on their faces they were not sure what to expect. And it wasn't just men who said in these conditions either.

Ivy Pitchard was a queen, Alexandra Nour. And she wrote this, In 1944, I was posted to Kahima in Burma. We were to work there for nearly a year. This was a tented hospital with a few long huts. There were never ending convoys of the sick and the wounded. However, the comradeship and the cheerfulness of the men gave me a great lift and I don't ever remember feeling sad. They set an example with their pure trust and faith that we would win through in the end.

[50 : 03] Ivy and the fellow Russia showed quite extraordinary bravery, especially in such a situation as Kahima Ridge. It was described by Lord Baird Bachman, I think, as being one of the most horrendous theatres of war ever in the history of human conflict.

I'm not saying these things to shock you or traumatic. I'm not saying these things to shock you or to be dramatic. Merely to point out that war is not glorious. And those who have served in times of war know that. They know it much better than we do. And we're not trying to glamorise or glorify any aspect of war today.

We are merely remembering with gratitude. We are merely remembering with gratitude. Very many ordinary and indeed extraordinary people who stood in a gap and fought and died to preserve our peace and freedom.

We must never forget their sacrifice. War is a tragedy. And their memory is a tragedy. It's worthy of everlasting remembrance.

For the ordinary soldiers, for men and women that we remember today, the main issue for them was that I believed, that they believed with all their hearts, that they were protecting and preserving the peace for their own and subsequent generations, as we said earlier to the young children.

[51 : 25] They had us at the young children. They had us at the young children. They had us at the heart of their sacrifice. They looked forward and saw a time and hoped for a time of peace. And we today, in many ways, are enjoying the fruits of that. We are living in peace.

When we look around us in our world and see the number of places where there is still war and conflict, we need to be grateful and to give thanks. And the sad thing is that this peace that people fought and died for, maybe that's a contradiction in terms of fighting for peace, but it is a reality. That peace always seems to elude humanity. In fact, I think I've been rightly saying today that there are more wars across the globe than there ever has been. Despite all the wars fought and the lines given for peace, peace still seems so elusive and so far from humanity. And the reason for that is that peace can never be won through wars.

Because the battle, if you like, is a spiritual battle. It cannot be won with guns and bombs. It can only be achieved and won through the cross of Jesus Christ. It's a spiritual battle.

Jesus is called the prince of peace. Jesus is called the prince of peace. And so I want to look today at 1 Peter chapter 4 on these 11 versions. And I want to look at three things that this passage shows us.

[52 : 58] First of all, we see a battle that has to be fought. And then we see a life that has to be lived. And finally in Revelation chapter 7, there is a peace to be gained.

A battle to be fought, a life to be lived, and a peace to be gained. So first of all, in verses 1 and 2, which may be followed through this passage here.

Verses 1 and 2, a battle to be fought. Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves, Peter says, also with the same attitude. Because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desire, but rather for the will of God.

The Christian life is a battle. The struggle of the Christian life is more than just an academic exercise in a religious way of life. It's much more than just doing religious things. It is a battle. First of all, it's a battle in two ways. First of all, there's a battle for our hearts. And that's what Peter is saying here. That we do not live the rest of our hearts. But evil human desires or passions, but rather for the will of God.

[54 : 20] We are to do God's will. Now that involves a battle. Because we fight with the old man, as he called. The man who has been crucified, but he is still very much part of our experience.

We are to do God's will. There's a clear teaching in the Bible that God doesn't just want blind obedience from us. He does ask for obedience.

But God, more than anything else, wants our hearts. My son, my daughter, give me your heart. That is what is at the heart of the struggle and of the battle. Because our hearts, like naked, are sinful. And our hearts do not want to obey God or to give God his place. God desires, on the other hand, all of our hearts. Love the Lord, good God, with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

That is the message of the Bible. God wants our hearts. He wants a living relationship with us through Jesus Christ. It is much more than obedience. Although that's a huge part of it. It's a relationship of love.

[55 : 31] That is personified, if you like, that is personified, if you like, by the heart. Hearts that are passionate for the will of God. Not hearts that are filled with our own desirable passions.

But hearts that are filled with us through Christ. And an intimate relationship with God. And an intimate with God. That itself is an amazing fact. itself is an amazing fact that our hearts, sinful human hearts can have an intimate relationship with God and a passion for Jesus.

Verse 1 says clearly that sin loses its power to defeat us. It doesn't mean that we will live sinless lives when we become vicious. But as we trust in Christ, sin loses its power.

And it requires a commitment, a heart commitment. We live today at the poppy and we give thanks for the commitment of men and women as we've said we've given their lives.

We live to the cross and we see the commitment of Christ. Jesus was willing to suffer in the cross. Philippians chapter 2, he did not consider equality with God as suffering to be grasped, but rather he humbled himself and made himself a sacrament.

[56 : 50] He became obedient even to death and death on a cross. The ultimate humiliation. Crucified as a criminal. And yet he was committed to that for us.

And that is what this verse speaks of. It speaks of a battle for our hearts. Arm yourselves. Arm yourselves, says Peter. Get ready for the battle.

There is a battle for each heart in here that goes on in the heavenly realms. The battles that we see on this earth are ferocious.

And they are horrendous. And they are tragedies. But the real battle that is going on, the ultimate battle, is a battle in the heavenly realms for your soul and for mine.

And we must never forget that. So there is a battle for our hearts. And again, as I said, Peter says, arm yourselves for this battle. It's up to each person in here to decide today where their hearts are.

[57 : 52] Whether their hearts lie with Christ in this battle. Or whether your hearts lie with yourselves. And you wish to please yourself, as it says, with earthly passions.

Or desire to do the will of God. That's a decision each one of us must make. That is something in which each one of us must examine their own heart. In this battle, where are their hearts?

Are they lined up on the side of Christ? Or are we still filling our hearts with what we decide for themselves? There's a battle going on. It's the real battle.

It's the real spiritual battle. There's also, secondly, a battle against sin. As I said, even when we become Christians, it doesn't mean that we're free from sin. The devil can no longer defeat us or take us to be his own again.

But he still makes our life. In this passage here, in the battle against sin, there's a past and present and future aspect to this battle.

[58 : 56] I think it was Winston Churchill who said, the further back we look, the further forward we can see. And the past has much to teach us. Our own spiritual past has much to teach us.

If we're Christians today. Because if we are in Christ, if we have trusted our souls to Christ, there is, in a sense, a past tense to our sin. Our sin has been covered, as it's said, by the blood of Christ.

Love covers our multitude of sins. The blood and the love of Jesus covers our sins. And we can remember how we used to spend our time. You see, there was no problem giving out hearts.

Well, there certainly wasn't with me anyway. Giving my heart 100% to sin. I didn't have to battle with that one. I have to battle today in giving my heart 100% to Christ.

Because there's an enemy at one. The past we learn from. Those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it, I think somebody said.

[59 : 55] We need to learn. And we need to think back to the day when our lives were dominated by sin. And 100% our hearts were given to that. And we need to remember that.

There's a list of sins here. You've spent enough time, says Peter, in the past, doing what pagans choose to do. Living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry. So that past aspect reminds us that we've given Satan enough time. We've given him enough of our time and enough of our heart.

And we need to turn and, in the battle, focus on giving ourselves 100% to Jesus. Living a Christian life recognizes that we've had a past.

Every saint has a past. And that makes us aware of the danger of trying to live this if we don't.

We've all had a past. Every saint has a past.

[60 : 57] Let's learn from it. And let's use it in the battle. Every sinner has a future. That's the other part of that quote. If today in here you haven't given your life to Christ, Christ wants you to have a future.

So there's a past element to this battle against sin. There's also a present element to it. There's a struggle against sin in the present.

See what it says in verse 4. They will think it's strange. Pagans, it says, will think it's strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation. And they keep abuse at you.

If we stand for Christ in our day and age and in our society, we will be abused. We can see it happening even more and more. We can see people through 50 years ago would have been praised for standing up and speaking about Christ in the work situation.

Today lose their jobs and our silents in this battle. They will heap abuse. As Christians we live a counter-cultural lifestyle.

[62 : 02] It's how somebody could at once. And the world thinks it's strange that we do not take part with them in the behaviours that we used to. I remember being horrified sometime, I think it was last year, reading of a grant, a public grant given to the National Theatre.

You put on a play about homosexual sex in a sauna. And that was you money and my money. And this article called it Liberated and Sophisticated and Progressive.

Because that's what the world thinks that such things are. Read Romans chapter 1. And God will tell you just exactly how liberated and sophisticated and progressive it really is.

And in a society which looks upon such things as liberated and sophisticated and progressive, we will have problems. Because when we stand up and proclaim Christ, we will be abused.

So be aware of that. This battle has a present element to it. But you see the important thing is that it not only has a past and a present. We see here in verse 5 that it has a future too.

[63 : 17] But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the Gospel was preached. God's judgment lies in the future.

God's judgment is real. God's judgment is waiting. It will happen. Every human heart and soul will be judged before God. God's judgment is real. We will speak more about that in the evening, I hope.

There is accountability. And one motive for overcoming these wicked influences is really to warn those who are caught up in them. And to say there is a future coming when you will stand before God.

And when you will give account for your actions. We all will. And we humbly must remember that as Christians too. For the dead and the living will be judged, it says here. So, in the light of this, as we understand that the real battle is a spiritual battle.

That the real search for peace is not through the wars that we see around us in the world. But I said in the heavenly realms. And it's a battle for the hearts and the souls of men and women.

[64 : 29] That's the real battle that's going on. And that is where we have to look at finding peace. Because history tells us that there will never be peace on this earth through war and through other human activities.

In the light of this battle, there is, for us as Christians, a life to be lived. There's a battle to be fought. A life to be lived. And verses 7 to 11 of this passage.

You can maybe look at this. There's so much in it. There's so much in it. It's difficult just to get it all mentioned. But we're looking at verses 7 to 11 of aspects, if you like, of Christian character.

And we see there, we have, in verse 7, to be a people of prayer. Be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Prayer. Again, not just a ritual of prayer.

But pray from the heart. This goes into our hearts. The kind of prayer that has played such a huge part in our nation, in our history. When we think back, the churches of this land were filled during the

war with people praying.

[65 : 37] Even after the war, people giving thanks. I wonder what these people would think today if they read articles like the one about the National Theatre.

The men and women who fought and even died for values and principles that were godly and Christian. And we didn't lose them in the war.

We've lost them in the peace. And we've lost them through prosperity. And through falling asleep, when we should have been fighting and battling and, above all, praying.

What they gained in the war, we've lost them in peace. And today our nation is backslidden. And today our nation has no word of God. Indeed, as we've seen, those who stand up for God are persecuted and isolated.

So we are to be people of prayer. We are to keep praying. And again, we'll speak more of that this evening. We are to pray because the God of heaven hears the prayer of his people.

[66 : 42] Secondly, in verse 8, we are to be a people not just of prayer, but of love. Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Again, love is something that many people during the war spoke of, of how people's love for each other was deepened and support.

that was given by love. That again, to my mind seems to have been lost. That we live, again, there are many aspects of love that are to be celebrated and rejoiced over.

But we live in a very hard and self-centered society now. We live in a society where the motto tries, you know, do it for yourself.

Do be all you can be and, you know, all for me sort of thing. I want everything and I want it now.

These kind of things. That was something that was unknown in the war here.

People looked after one another. Again, we have to be a people of hospitality in verse 9. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. So, again, something that maybe we haven't noticed in the islands, because whenever I come back here, I'm very much aware of the hospitality and the warmth.

[67 : 58] But as you go into our cities and into our towns, you see that that kind of warmth and hospitality is sadly lacking and missing. We live in a very self-centered, self-satisfying country and society.

And we think back on the various wars and we remember many, many stories of sacrifice and love and hospitality where people pulled together. Now it's all about the individual and what we can get for ourselves.

So, these are the characteristics of the Christian. The prayer, the love, the hospitality. There's also service, to serve one another.

Again, in verse 10. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. Prayer, love, hospitality, service.

Prayer, love, hospitality, service. These are not just characteristics of the Christian life that we are called to live. They are also the weapons that we are to use in the battle.

[69 : 13] That's crucial to see that. These are not just characteristics which we as Christians should display to those who are not Christians and to one another.

They are the very weapons that God gives us to fight the battle with. Prayer and love and hospitality and service. These are the ways that we show in our own lives that a battle has been won and won by Christ.

When we pray. When we pray from our hearts, when we cry out to God, it shows the victory of Christ. It shows that we believe and trust in Jesus to hear an answer. When we love others as we love ourselves, it shows that Christ has won a victory in our lives.

And that our love is real. And that it's God's love, not just our own. When we show hospitality, even that is something that shows a victory of grace in our lives.

And of course also service. Again, showing the triumph of Christ in our hearts and lives. These are not just characteristics. These are weapons that we use in the battle, in the spiritual battle.

[70 : 29] So there is a battle that must be fought. And we must remember that the crucial battle is fought in the heavenly realms. It's a spiritual battle. And it's a battle for your soul and for my soul.

And each soul in here will be won over by one or two powers. That is the power of the love of Christ. Or the power of the devil. There is no in-between land.

There is no in-between place where we can find refuge in. Each heart here will go one way or the other. We will have one master. That life that we live in Christ is part of the battle.

And the characteristics that Peter speaks of here is, as I said, the weapons. Not just the characteristics that we show, but the weapons that we use in telling others of the victory of Christ. Jesus said, this is how people will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. I find that frightening. Because he doesn't say, this is how people will know you are my disciples.

[71 : 35] If you go to the same church, or you sing the same hymns or psalms, or read the same version of the Bible. He says, this is how people will know. This is the weapons in the battle, that you love each other.

That is frightening. That's challenging. It's not an option. And finally, we've looked at the battle that must be fought, the life that's to be lived.

Finally, the peace that's to be gained. And from that, we turn to Revelation chapter 7. The passage we're right there. We look at some of these words again.

These are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Down to the end. Therefore, they are before the throne of God. And said, from day and night in his temple, he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them. Not any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to strains of living water.

[72 : 39] And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. This is the picture of peace that the world strives for and longs for. That your heart and my heart strives for and longs for.

And it's a picture of heaven. And it's a picture of a place that has been won for us by Jesus Christ. And through his cross and resurrection. And it is the only way.

It is the only place to find peace. And you see, there is peace for us there because of another battle. Let me take you to the garden of Gethsemane. Luke chapter 22.

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Yet not my will that yours be done. An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly. And his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. Because of that battle. And because of the sacrifice of Christ. We have a place of peace.

[73 : 38] This is the reality. This is the work of the prince of peace. In your heart and in my heart. And there is no other way to peace. There really is not.

All the human efforts to find peace will fail. There is only one way to God. And there is only one way to peace. And that is in Jesus Christ.

The ultimate battle of peace. The place of Calvary. The battle between good and evil. The battle for your heart and for my heart. Jesus was fighting for good peace.

For my peace. You know, if you are looking for peace today. There is only one place where you can find it. There is only one way to find peace. It is not through war or battles.

Or anything that is human. It is through the love of God in Jesus Christ. How do you know that?

[74 : 36] Well, if you go back to the end of the second world war. I better be careful when I say here. There might be somebody in here who remembers that. Please don't hear me if there isn't.

But there was peace. And I can only imagine what that must have felt like. There must have been the most incredible feeling.

That after six years the war was over. And at last peace had come upon the land again. But you see, the peace wasn't peace because of a feeling.

The feeling must have been wonderful. The peace was there because there was a treaty. And a treaty had been signed between the various nations who had been at war.

And it was in the strength of that treaty that the peace was real. That is a treaty between God and man on Calvary. And it's signed in the blood of Christ.

[75 : 37] And it's real. And if you trust in him and if you come to him. You will find peace and you will find forgiveness. And you will find love and you will find grace and mercy.

You will find everything that your heart longs for. And hungers for. I can only point you to it. I can't convince you of that.

My words have no power in them to do that. But the Holy Spirit can convince you of that. If you are looking for peace today. This day that we give thanks for the efforts of so many people.

And remember with gratitude and with love their sacrifice. We must look to Christ. The poppy is a wonderful symbol. But the poppy has no power in it.

The cross does. It has the power of the love of God. And if you are looking truly today. Looking for peace. Then come to the cross of Christ.

[76 : 37] There is a green hill far away. Outside the city wall. Where everybody was crucified. And died to save us all. That is where we can find peace. In Christ alone.

I have said enough. I have gone on for too long. I remember as a young boy. A man called Murdo. And Murdo fascinated me. Because Murdo. Every time he would come to help us with the peace. Or with the sheep. Or whatever we were doing. Murdo. Every time he took a glass of water. He would pay and give thanks to God for it. And I found this quite strange. Because I thought well we used to have grace at meals. But when you had a drink of water. You didn't bother. And I asked my mother.

Why did Murdo do this? And I was told that Murdo and some of his comrades. Had been under fire. Had been trapped in the trench for three days.

[77 : 36] Without water. Without green water. And for the rest of his life. Murdo remembered. What water was worth. And Murdo gave thanks.

You know in here today. We have an offer. Of life. Of peace. Through Jesus Christ. And the choice is us. As I wish whether we take it.

Maybe you haven't yet seen the value of this. Murdo never forgot. Because for three days. He had been without water. He never forgot the value.

My prayer is for anyone in here today. Who doesn't know Jesus Christ as their saviour. Is that they would understand. What value there is in this offer.

This peace. And this love that Jesus offers. It's real. It's lasting. It's eternal. And it's only a prayer. For me. Lord Jesus Christ.

[78 : 35] We thank you. We thank you for your sacrifice. And your suffering. And I gave. And we remember with gratitude. That of other people. So Lord. We give thanks. That at the cross.

There is indeed. Peace to be found. Love. Eternal. Peace. And forgiveness. Lord. Help us to open our hearts. To receive that peace. In your name.

For your name's sake. And for your glory. May be. Amen. I'm sorry. I've gone on. For part too long. We're going to sing.

O Church. Arise. Mission phase. One. Two. One. Three. O Church. Arise. And put your armor on. It's one of the great hymns. And it's very appropriate. For today. It calls us as a church.

Into this battle. But let's remember. As we go. Into the battle. That the weapons we use. Are not human weapons. But the weapons. Of the love of God. Of the care. Of the service.

[79 : 32] Of the love. And the hospitality. That Christ. Asks us from. O Church. Arise. And put your armor on. Hear the call of Christ. Our captain. And now may grace.

And mercy. And peace. From almighty God. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. One God. Rest upon us. And remain with us. Now and evermore.

Amen.