

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Remembrance Sunday

13th November 2022

Preach Rev Philip Knowles. Ps/Hymns Ps 124 2nd Version, 758 verse 1, 751, 608 Read: John 19:13-18, 28-30 Text: John 19:13-30

When you go home, tell them of us, and say,
for their tomorrow we gave our today.

THE ODE OF REMEMBRANCE

*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.*

Title The Poppy a symbol of Remembrance.

As you know the Sunday closest to the 11th of November is remembrance Sunday.

Services are held to remember those who gave their life in WW1& 2 and now includes other conflicts since then.

This year marks the 104th year anniversary when WW 1 ended.

It was the day the **armistice**, or **peace agreement** was signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany at France.

It was **on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918**, the guns of Europe fell silent.

After four years of the most bitter and devastating fighting, The Great War was finally over.

The Armistice (**Truce**) was signed at 5am in a railway carriage in France on 11th, November, 1918.

Six hours later, at 11am, the war ended.

The first Act of Remembrance was conducted in **1919** throughout Britain and the Commonwealth.

Originally called **Armistice Day**, it commemorated the end of hostilities from the previous year in 1918.

It came to symbolise the end of the war and provided an opportunity to remember those who had died.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945 the name Armistice Day became known as Remembrance Day in order to include all those who had fallen in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

However, During the First World War, soldiers, sailors and many more who died abroad were buried where they fell.

Many had no marked grave. Without a body to bury, families could not conduct normal funeral practices.

This led to the building of local and national war memorials, standing silent for two minutes on Remembrance Day, and a poppy was worn as a sign or symbol remember a fallen loved one.

During WW 1, there was a stretch of land, a countryside on the southern area of Belgium and the northwest of France, known as **Flanders or Flanders field**.

This area became one of the most destroyed regions of the entire battlefield along the western front during WW1.

Yet despite the devastation, **across the fields of Flanders, there grew a red flower known as the poppy.**

One soldier, a man by the name of **John McCrae**, who was a Canadian medic serving in the allied forces.

He was responsible more than any other for the adoption of the Poppy as a symbol of Remembrance.

During the war he lost a very good friend and colleague.

As John was in the middle of burying his friend who died on the fields in Flanders, he looked across the countryside, which had been torn up and blown up by warfare,

he caught sight of a bunches of red flowers, which turned out to be poppies growing here and there across the landscape.

In the midst of death, there were signs of life by the poppies that were blooming even in the hardest of situations.

In May, 1915, John McCrae, then went on to write the poem, **Flanders Field**, and his poem was first published on **8th December 1915**.

This remembrance poem inspired **an American teacher**, Moina Michael.

While working at the YMCA Overseas War Secretaries' headquarters in New York City in November 1918, **Moina Michael** read **John McCrae's** poem "**In Flanders Fields**".

She immediately "*...vowed always to wear a red poppy of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance and as an emblem for keeping the faith with all who died*".

Through her vision for remembrance, **Moina Michael** started to make and sell red silk poppies such as those mentioned in the poem, Flanders Fields:

They were then brought to England, and in **1921** the Royal British Legion adopted the poppy as its emblem and symbol of remembrance for every Remembrance Day, since then.

The Poppy is the enduring symbol of Remembrance.

However today among many, the red poppy is rejected as it symbolises the remembrance of war, and death.

There are calls for the red poppy to be replaced by a white poppy that symbolises peace.

You will see some people wear a white poppy instead of the red poppy.

But we must never forget that peace came by a price being paid.

For our remembrance service today, I want us to draw some lessons from the red poppy, and see how it still continues to be a symbol of remembrance to us today.

But above point the way in remembrance to the ultimate & supreme sacrifice of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I FIRST THE POPPY IS A SYMBOL OF CONFLICT

And as we think of that Poppy we are brought back to conflict, the war fought and lives lost.

During those years of conflict, war, and many battles, soldiers faced a horrible death, and they died an awful death on the battle fields.

Many lay dying in pain, no one able to come and help them and many died where they fell dead on the battlefields of conflict.

Why was it that men and woman had to go to war, why is that conflicts and wars rage across our world?

It is because we live in a fallen and sinful world. Men rise up with pride, which is sin, within the heart of man seeking power and position.

You see, MAN WILL ALWAYS BE AT WAR WITH HIS FELLOW MAN BECAUSE BY NATURE HE IS AT WAR WITH GOD.

We learn from the Scriptural record, [Genesis 3:1](#) – humanity was not only formed in Adam, but humanity have fallen in Adam.

Man was created for fellowship with his Maker, and to be at peace with his Creator.

But because of Adam's sin, by nature and by practice are at war with God.

Mankind having fallen in Adam are not at peace with God but rather opposed to God, a transgressor of God's Holy Law and a violator of His Righteous commandments.

Man is a war with God. He is a rebel to God. He is an enemy of God. [James 4:4](#) reminds us, "...***know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.***"

Sinners have chosen wilfully to Defy and Despise the Law of God.

Paul writing to the church at Rome said in [Romans 3:10](#)- "***As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.***

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Verse 23, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”

We are all sinners, we may not all go out and commit terrible crime or do that which others might do, but none the less we are all sinners, all born in sin, all born with a heart full of deceit.

Until fallen man finds peace with God he cannot hope to be at peace with his fellow man.

It is our sin which causes conflict. Sin causes separation, sin will keep us from Heaven.

Though we are thinking today of the conflicts on foreign and even home soil, yet we must think of another conflict, one against the greatest of all enemies and that is sin.

The conflict and the battle against sin was on the battlefield of a hill called Mount Calvary.

The war of all wars.

The Lord in speaking to Satan said in **Genesis 3:15** ***“I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed.”***

Note that the Lord announces that He would place **enmity, or war** between Satan and the woman and between the two seeds.

This declaration of war was for the purpose of Christ to destroy the works of the devil, as stated by **1 John 3:8** and to destroy or render powerless the devil who had the power of death.

This battle was fought at Calvary. The Lord Jesus Christ, died to gave us His life that we might live eternally.

You say why there is still so much sin and strife in our world today? it is because people wilfully refuse Christ due to their sinful nature.

Believer, through Christ we are no longer at war with God or on the side against God, rather we are on His side as His purchased people.

We have peace with God through the blood of Christ.

Unsaved one have you acknowledged before God that you are at war with Him, in pride you challenge Him.

You need His forgiveness, humble yourself before Him, that is where you must start, and enter into rest with Him.

II SECOND, THE POPPY IS A SYMBOL OF A COST “when they were come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him...”

During those years of battle much blood was shed.

In Flanders field alone, many hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers lost their lives, their blood stained the soil of the battlefield.

In other words, they entered war to pay the cost, for our freedom and our liberty.

There is always a cost to war and conflict

Their sacrifice is summed up in these words, “They gave their today for our tomorrow.”

Even our, Lord said Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for His friends.

Love is seen in its fullest degree in it what does. In other words, love is seen in its fullest degree not by words but by actions. They loved their country and because of that love it cost them their lives.

I don't pass or make light of their sacrifice, but again I must cause to remember **the ultimate sacrifice**, a sacrifice not for time for but all eternity, for the friend of sinners willingly laid down His life a ransom for the many.

He offered Himself a sacrifice for sin. On the Tree of Mt Calvary, the conflict and the battle against sin, was fought.

As the shepherd of His sheep, Christ sacrificed Himself to be the sinners substitute, bearing the guilt of sin. He bore the burden of our sin, as all our iniquities were lad upon Him.

In this War against sin, Christ precious blood, the blood of infinite value and virtue was shed on the cross. **Isa 53:5** "**He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities...**".

You see, sin cannot be forgiven by our own efforts, sin in our hearts cannot be cleansed in any other way apart from the blood of Jesus Christ – that blood being applied by faith to our deceitful, sinful hearts.

Ephesians 1:7 "**...we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.**"

Have your sins be forgiven? Are you saved from sin? You must by faith alone, depend on the blood of Jesus Christ, that blood applied by faith to your heart,

Admit your a sinner before God, Acknowledge your sins against God, and Ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus Name.

III THIRD, THE POPPY IS A SYMBOL OF CONQUEST

The poppy speaks of conquest, it speaks of victory. The battle raged, the battle was fought and the victory was won.

We have civil and religious liberties today because of the victory that was gained for us.

Because of this conquest the Flanders Poppy gives a message of life and hope for the entire world reminding us of the new life and freedoms that we enjoy as a result of the selfless sacrifice of our fallen fellow-countrymen.

It has been noted throughout history that after war red poppies seemed to pop up in the battlefields and on soldier's graves.

The most detailed incident of poppies springing up took place in WW1 in Flanders Field, Belgium.

(In the craters) where bombs fell, on the field, alongside the graves of the dead, **poppies bloomed everywhere.**

From the place of death and great disruption there sprang up life and hope.

Such **seeds can lie dormant** in the soil for up to 80 – 100years, and when disturbed and exposed to the light they suddenly spring into life and glorious bloom.

This is what happened on the field.

Therefore, we must think about the conquest the victory of the cross. On Calvary Christ said **John 19:30** ***“it is finished.”*** **It is perfected, completed.** He won the victory.

Therefore, He rose from the grave, and now lives in the power of an endless life.

The point is, the victory of the cross, in defeating, the devil, sin and death, gives hope to lost sinners.

Christ accomplished redemption for all His people. He secured everlasting peace by His blood.

He bruised the serpents head. It is because of Christ Conquest, sinners can have the hope of everlasting life.

This should encourage us to preach the gospel message, and wait for the Lord do His own work of salvation.

You see, the poppy seeds that had been **sown in the field, nothing happened for all those years.** But when the ground was broken up, disturbed by the blasts, the seed had grown.

As we preach the gospel, we sow the good seed. It may have been dormant for years; nothing seems to happen.

You may have spoken to many people, and have had no response, yet all the time the gospel seed has been sown, planted, but when God works in His own sovereign time, in a ***person's life He exposes the seed to the light of His Word, then suddenly life appears and that individual blossoms for Christ.***

Dear, Brother, Sister keep sowing the gospel seed.

Scripture assures us, the seed Christ sowed by His death will reap life for sinners.

All who repent of their sin and put their faith and trust in Christ's finished work and precious shed blood alone for salvation – will have eternal life!

Come sinner to Christ today, Life is offered unto you Hallelujah, He will save you / He will save you now!

