

## Welcome

Welcome to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church – recorded in the church and, hopefully, viewed by an ‘on-line’ congregation. It’s regrettable that we can’t hold ‘live services’ for the next few weeks but, please God, it won’t be long before we can once more. In the meantime the themes and rhythms of Christian worship will carry us along through these weeks as we all must endure another period of separation – the reminder is that the God who we worship today is the God who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

‘Through all the changing scenes of life’. My, how the scenes are changing at the moment – here, in the US, everywhere; we worship a God who does not change. Though, of course, we worship God who we know through Jesus Christ, whose life, suffering, death and rising again shows that the very stuff of life, of change, is part of God’s experience as well – and today is Remembrance, when we remember the many, many lives lost or blown about by the most profound changes of all.

Thanks be, then, that God in Christ knows exactly what loss and suffering – and change – means, and rises above it all, and promises to bring us through. This is the God we worship

‘Still, my soul, be still’

Mike Garnier

## Call to worship

**Leader** We come in a spirit of remembrance.  
**All** **We come in today’s uneasy peace to reflect on yesterday’s conflicts & continuing war**  
**Leader** We confess that we have easily accepted what was gained,  
**All** **And quickly forgotten the cost..**  
**Leader** We admit that we are too easily compromised by the world around us,  
**All** **And often mistakenly believed or frequently failed to oppose**  
**Leader** We come to hear the call once more to love our enemies  
**All** **We come to hear the promises of God in the word of Jesus –**  
**Leader** *‘Father into your hands I commit my spirit’ –*  
**All** **With thankful hearts, we commit our spirits into God’s hands,**  
**Leader** We remember, look forward, and worship

BPW 535 [‘Lord, For the Years’](#)

Chet Valley Churches

## Opening Prayer

Lord God, in the season of remembrance, challenged by hard things, aware of our part in a world riven with violence and injustice and – this day – drawn to silence, we worship you.

### *Silence*

The silence draws us, the great, empty, distance between what we are and what you would have us be, which is silent because there’s little we can say; as the guns fell silent at armistice and folk emerged dumbstruck into peace, so we emerge from our failures, awestruck at your forgiveness.

And as you have spoken down the ages as often through silence as through the noise of our words and thoughts, so we ask you now to meet with us in the quietness, in the thoughts of this day, in the silence in which we come before you; remembering, and resolving that between what we have become and what you would have us be there shall be no distance, and we shall know you as you are – Lord, we worship you, be with us in Christ Jesus

### Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen*

## [‘Oh Lord the clouds are gathering’](#)

Graham Kendrick for Peace Sunday 2020, in partnership with Fellowship of Reconciliation,

## Prayers

### Prayers – (with images and response):

We pray & remember the humble & gracious of the world; who lost their lives in war; did great things behind the scenes, suffer still in silence. Lord, as we seek to remember, we ask you to bring to our minds those who are never lost to you

**Leader:** Through our lives and by our prayers  
**All** **Your Kingdom come**

We pray & remember the lost & forgotten of the world; who scabble to escape the destruction of their country; hide in fear for their lives & mourn their dead; appear in no one's roll call of honour. Lord, as we struggle to remember, we ask you to bring their plight to our attention, those who are never lost to you

Leader: Through our lives and by our prayers  
**All Your Kingdom come**

We pray & remember the terrors inflicted on the world & those who perpetrate them; so that we might learn, so that there might be justice, so that there might be peace. Lord, if sometimes we wish we could forget, we ask you to help us burn with passion for the right, which is never lost to you

Leader: Through our lives and by our prayers  
**All Your Kingdom come**

We pray and remember the ones who have been so much a part of our lives but who are no longer with us; who have given themselves to us freely; who have been there at our most significant moments; who we would never forget. Lord, as we determine to remember we ask you to hold them high in our hearts, those who are never lost to you

Leader: Through our lives and by our prayers  
**All Your Kingdom come**

## Readings

[Amos 5.18-24](#)

[Matthew 25.1-13](#)

## Sermon

Hard words of Scripture in a hard world – the warning of a prophet to the complacent 'religios' of his day and the parable of Jesus about those who aren't ready when the Kingdom comes.

Hard words indeed. In today's hard times, when all anyone wants, really, is a bit of comfort, hope, an upbeat message; to offset the gloom and doom of another lockdown or the continuing turmoil in the US or the unending misery of a world pandemic; Instead of that the Bible gives us hard words.

I say the Bible 'gives us' – of course I could have ignored the set readings in this week's lectionary and opted for something else, a nice psalm, perhaps, or some of the nice saying of Jesus, but that's the thing about the Bible –

It's not just a book to be turned to to find what we want; it's a book that confronts us and challenges us – actually, as some say, it's a book that reads us as much as we might read *it* –

And in these passages, on Remembrance Sunday, it certainly reads us. It reads us in our complacency. You could say that the mess of the world has got a lot to do with our complacency – whether it's because we've complacently used its resources until the rising seas, the rising temperatures and the melting snows shout 'enough!'

Or because we've complacently got on with our greed until a coronavirus runs amok and shouts 'stop!'

Or because, as in Europe in the 30s or Vietnam in the 1950s or the Syrian Civil War in 2011 we thought Hitler could be contained or the American Way was the only way or the Arab Spring meant everyone just wanted to be like us – until millions of soldiers died, villages burned under napalm, refugees and asylum seekers poured over the borders

And the old human sinfulness raised its ugly head again..

That's what Remembrance is all about, I think – as well as remembering with a nostalgic glow heroic sacrifices and personal tragedies – young boys killed in war, white war memorials laid out in peaceful fields

We are, today, to remember that we are sinful indeed, prone to pride, greed, violence, self-interest; it has destroyed millions of lives before; it is doing so still. There is nothing to be complacent about, see – we are not better in this century than in previous centuries; we are as likely to be as tribal, divided, self-centred, self-serving as ever we were – remember..

'Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord'..remember..'darkness, not light'...remember... 'I hate, I despise your religious excesses'..remember..'justice, not ostentatious offerings; righteousness, not noise'....remember....

The Bible reads us, this Remembrance Day

It reads us in our unpreparedness; the oil of peace in our lamps has run out..remember...we are unprepared to build a better world...remember; we have fallen asleep in our plenty while the poor and the lowly moulder in their need...remember

The Bible reads us, this Remembrance Day. I was listening to a talk by some preacher or other who was banging on about how each of us carries God's future in our hands..

Maybe that's true...but not this day, I thought..this day isn't for the future; it's for... *remembering*..the world in which our forbears lost much, gave everything, suffered greatly; a world in which war ravaged the world, tore through communities and families, took lives by the million – *and still does* –

They used to say that at least in a war everyone's united against a common enemy – that's part of the nostalgia of today, isn't it? They were all in this together, in a Lancaster Bomber over Dresden or a trench in Flander's Fields or a bomb shelter in a Bristol garden.

Today's common enemy? Coronavirus? It's the enemy of us all; but, to me, it looks as if the world has never been more divided – that the response has never been more divided – imagine the scramble if a vaccine comes along, to get hold of it, to deliver it to enough people...imagine rich countries keeping it to themselves; imagine arguments about cost, supply..availability..who deserves it first – who can't get hold of it for love nor money..

We are divided – one more aspect of our sinfulness...*remember* – they were divided between haves and have-nots in Amos' day....*remember* – let justice roll down like waters....*remember*

They were divided in Jesus' day...*remember*, 'there won't be enough for you and us'....*remember*..

The Bible reads us, this Remembrance day..and if that was all, we would be sorry indeed- we would be dead in our sinfulness; there would be no hope in us.

But the lesson of the parable is this. God's future is now – not in some remote, remembered, rose-coloured past , where all the bronze statues and white stone memorials are in danger, I think, of making the matchless fear of war seem somehow less fearful –

Nor is God's future in some far-off future world when all is peaceful again the other side of coronavirus or when a US President heals the nation – or when a few believers carry it

God's future is *now*...now, as Amos says, God hates complacent, self-serving religion – *now* let justice roll down like waters..*now*...

*Now*, as Jesus tells his parable, they are plotting to kill him, he will soon be arrested and tried and put to death...*now* as he gives himself up to death the Kingdom comes.

*Now*..that's the comfort and hope of the Bible.

It's different to the hope of the world, which is always looking to some future, better day, 'somewhere over the rainbow',

sometime never! Some comfort, I imagine, but not much if you're crushed into a troop carrier grounding on Omaha beach on D-Day or girding up your webbing before going over the top of a trench in France.

Then you need hope *now*..

Or else the world's always looking to some rosy-half-remembered past, when everyone was in this together and you could leave your doors unlocked at night and children played out all day in the fields – the good old days – some comfort, but not much..they weren't good days in Auschwitz or on the Burma railway..

We need hope *now*..that's the Christian hope. The Bible may sound hard, sometimes, but it reads us because, really, it rings with the life of God, and God 'reads us' –

better to say 'God knows us' – knows our hearts, knows our sinfulness, knows our fears; knows our life, for he has lived it in Jesus; knows our death for he has died it in Jesus..

knows what we have to endure, in these coronavirus days..

and if we will replace our complacent religiosity with *justice*; if we will be prepared to live in God's Kingdom; if we will remember that we are always, and always have been, sinful

the hope is *now* – for he lives for ever *now*...and whenever it is, it is *now* – for no one knows the day or the hour

### Act of Remembrance

We remember the dead of all the world's wars – those we knew, those of whom we have heard, those once called enemies who lie, now, beneath the same grass, those whose lives were taken for nothing more than where they happened to live or how they went about their daily lives; those who will die today because of war.

**Leader** We will remember them,  
**All** We will remember them,

We remember all those who continue to grieve the loss of loved ones, friends, homes, communities; all those who continue to yearn, and work, for peace and reconciliation; all those who continue to live in hope despite the tragedy of their circumstances; warfare, asylum-seeking, Covid 19...

**Leader** We will remember them,  
**All** **We will remember them,**

We remember in silence before God, all those who have died in war.

**- TWO MINUTES' SILENCE**

They shall not grow 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

**Leader** We will remember them  
**All** **We will remember them**

**BPW117: 'By gracious powers'**

Sarah Dodds

**Offering**

On Remembrance day we gather in solidarity with all those who, this day, remember with aching hearts – and yet we are thankful, for we have not had to give everything – yet we do give, of ourselves in these and all our gifts – and as we give so we resolve once more to live *now* and every day the life of God's Kingdom

**The Grace is said:**

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

**CG 42 'God to enfold you'**

Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

**Blessing**

So may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always. Amen.

*Thanks to Rachel M, Sarah D, to the Tyndale Singers and Mike Garnier, to Debbie P for the readings and to Nick and Tina for getting the script out in the post. Thanks to Ian for producing and recording the service in the church, so that it looks on the website substantially the same as 'live services' in Tyndale have over the last few weeks.*

*We wish each other well and commit once more to mutual support and encouragement in any way we are able, through the coming week.*

*A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am*