

Hymns; 144; 187; 186, 494

Sermon for Remembrance 2025 yr C

Job 19:23-27a, 2 Thess 2: 1-5, 13-17; Luke 20: 27-38

May the words of my mouth ...

The year has many days marked to remember something! We remember birthdays and anniversaries but there are numerous other days we don't want to forget!

The day we met our spouse or partner. The day we started or retired from work – You know the kind of thing!

Today we have a birthday to remember with Sue Barnard and her family!

At the end of October Sue celebrated 80 years.

She has given so much to the life of this parish – particularly at St John the Divine

A life lived in service to her family and neighbours and to our Lord Jesus,

We are delighted to celebrate with you Sue!

Congratulations and Thank you for all give us!!

Sometimes the whole country joins in marking a date - as we did for the Late Queen Elizabeth's jubilees.

Then there are important days that are based in religion –like Christmas and Easter for us and increasingly we notice our neighbours celebrating their important days like Diwali, [for Hindu \Sikh 21st Oct 25]

Or the end of Ramadan for Muslim brothers and sisters at Eid al-Fitr, [31 March 25]

Remembrance Day might feel religious for us because as Christians we involve God in all our life and we've come to church to remember in God's presence.

But it's a day to remember whatever our faith or race.

We all wear our poppies with pride and to show we remember the many fallen in conflict, Giving thanks for their sacrifice for our freedom and peace.

We might have particular individuals in mind today, but we also have an enduring hope that remembering the human cost of past conflicts, will stop the world repeating the same mistakes.

We can find remembering in today's readings from Scripture.

In the OT reading, Job, if you remember, is suffering cruelly – he has lost everything home, children, security, possessions, and he is also suddenly stricken by a disfiguring and painful skin disease.

Three friends visit to support him in his suffering, but they tell him he must surely have sinned before God – only sinners suffer such awful illness.

We are often led down the same path of reasoning – ‘what have I done to deserve this’ people say.
As if our loving God dishes out great calamities to punish us!

But illness and misfortune befall good and bad alike.
Life is random and unpredictable, but if we can recognise it, God is walking with us, holding us in our suffering and desperation.

Job is certain that he has not ignored God’s laws and doesn’t deserve what he is suffering! – he is righteous and angry!
He wants to speak to God, even argue with God! about the reason for his dire state;

But as he reflects, he understands that God knows all about Job’s misery - and his anger.

A light shines for Job! He can recognise His living God! Knows that ‘his redeemer liveth’.

Deep down Job always knew it – before the death of his children and the onset of illness he daily, dutifully, lived by Gods rules - not for reward but because it was the right thing to do.

Misfortune and sickness had blinded him to the presence of God
At last Job has remembered **he can trust God.**

Sometimes when life is at its’ cruellest, – when we don’t know where to turn, God seems absent
As it did for Jesus on the cross. [Matt 27:46]

As it did for troops waiting helplessly for reinforcements to escape enemy fire.
Crew in a badly damaged aeroplane,
Sailors knowing their ship is going down,
Prisoners under interrogation –
God can seem far, far away.

But He’s not!

Jesus promised to be with us always whatever our state or circumstances. [Matt 28:20]
Like Job we must remember to trust God.

Paul is writing to a new church in Thessalonica.
A rumour has been spread that Jesus has returned and they've missed it the great return!
They don't see Jesus in glory and the world is still in chaos. So what is true?

Remember what I taught you Paul says

Remember! the good news of God's love in Jesus.
He died to save us!
Hang on to that!
The time is 'not yet' but we **will** see Him and share in his resurrection glory!

We mustn't be dispirited by fake news and horror stories.
Trust in God!
take courage and strength from knowing that God loves us enough to die for us

Stick to 'the way' Jesus taught us; Love God and your neighbour and remain faithful to the end
Stand firm; committed, strong, brave.

In the Gospel, the Sadducees are trying to catch Jesus out. They are a religious group who only believed in the Torah, first 5 books of the Bible, those attributed to Moses.

They did not believe in resurrection.
They rely on the Torah as the Law.

they think that answering their question Jesus must either disrespect the Law of Moses or deny the resurrection of the dead

Their question is about Levirate marriage.
If an Israelite husband died childless, his brother was expected to take the widow as wife to produce children for the dead man – to perpetuate his name.

It was about keeping the name alive – cheating death's ability to annihilate.
In their scenario the 7 brothers and then the woman all die. Death wins!

Jesus reminds the Sadducees of the story of Moses and the burning bush. [Exod 3:2] Which is of course Torah,

In it the story God speaks to Moses, who has stopped to gaze in wonder at a desert bush which is alight, burning - but isn't destroyed!

As he is talking to Moses God refers to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – these three patriarchs are of course dead!

Jesus says God is God of the living and the dead because all are alive to God.
His love disables death.

Outwitted by Jesus' answer the Sadducees are left to ponder about resurrection and the power of God

As we remember the fallen, it's reassuring to remember that we have the promise of eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection.

But knowing they are resting in peace doesn't banish the hurt and grief of losing someone.
Nor does it stop the struggle with disabling injuries

Jesus has shown us the way to live, and his command to 'Love our neighbour' doesn't start wars.

But sadly the causes of war exist in us all.

Greed, selfishness, vengeance.

Sometimes there is no choice but to stand against ideologies that foster hate, exploitation and discrimination.

Our poppies are a visual reminder of the trenches where so many died on both sides in WW1.

The Battlefield churned up by shell and tank produced a red cloud of fragile beauty the following spring.

The flowers replaced death and brokenness with a vision of life and hope

in Jesus we have a God who is loving and merciful and concerned with everyday life.

A God prepared to sacrifice himself to give us a way home to the Father

To his merciful care we commend those who gave their today so that we might enjoy our tomorrow

John Maxwell Edmonds (1875-1958), [
Amen