

Remembrance Sunday 2018 (Sunday Nov.11).

I think it's only right that we spend one day, out of 365, remembering the sacrifices of those that have gone before us. Its 100 yrs since world war one to this date.

What are we remembering?

Soldiers and their sacrifices

The lives that were laid down by soldiers in recent wars, remembering particularly today WW1 and WW2. But let's not forget those who are fighting for freedom and justice even now - The on-going sacrifices of soldiers currently in several countries - War in Darfur (ongoing); Iraq War 2003-2011; Yemen War 2009-ongoing; Syrian War – ongoing; War against Boko-Haram (Westernization is sacrilegous) founded since 2002..

Those soldiers suffering with life-changing injuries or mental health problems – having to find a way to adapt and cope with this. We must remember specifically, the members of our South Australian families or your friend or family. We will pray for them, later in our service. Those having to live with bereavement, or with people they know changed forever by the result of war.

The Unknown soldiers – so many thousands of soldiers who have never been found or buried. For example – 8000/12000 at Tyn Cot in Belgium are unknown graves.

War effects on our world

And we remember the outcomes and effects of war on our world... I was horrified to find out that:

- 3421 Years of recorded history – only 376 without war somewhere in our world.
- Since WW2, only 48 days without war.
- You remember and can quickly recall to mind various warzones around the world.
- Almost every day, somewhere in our news, people are fighting and dying for causes that they believe in – it's become almost normal for us? Yet for those people their whole lives; their family, homes, businesses and much more, are simply swallowed up by war
- Perhaps we even now live in a world where the horrors of war are somehow lessened because of how frequently we hear about them and by now being able to see images and film at any time, due to the various forms of media available to us.

Freedoms – fought and died for.

- Above all – I think we are here today to remember, and appreciate the freedoms that have been claimed on our behalf by soldiers and their families. FREEDOM IS NEVER FREE. IT COMES WITH A PRICE/ COST.
- **Freedoms that today's generation often take for granted** – we have been able to come to worship today, express opinions and views, move freely, live peacefully and interact with any person we choose – for all of this, and much more – we should be thankful to a soldier.
- Soldiers, amongst others, who have fought and died for our freedoms
- ...They fought and died for their freedoms and ours – but that freedom was never free, it came with the highest of costs.

So where do we, fit in this picture?

Remembering: All of us here today, Christians or not, are called to remember. The Bible mentions remembrance/remembering more than 230 times

Every time we come to the Lord's Table for Communion we are called again to 'remember', God recognises the importance of remembering.

- The Bible also reminds us and instructs us that “*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends*” (John 15:13) (NIV)
- Of course, this is an insight from God about Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross – the ultimate selfless sacrifice.
- But I also believe that this passage is speaking about men and women like our service-people that have laid down their lives for the causes they have been fighting for.
- *In the readings today, the widow of Zarephath was brave enough to sacrifice her last meal for a stranger (prophet) in faith. It must have taken a lot of courage to make that decision – share her last meal.*
- *In the Gospel it must have taken a lot of faith/ courage to put in the 2 copper coins on the offertory plate. Jesus said, “for all contributed out of their abundance but she put in all she had”*
- I think we all can remember these stories but what have we done with our Freedom. What choice have or are we making? Freedom is never free.

I would like to tell you a short story about remembering – do we remember as these people do?

- Matt Maupin (724th Transport Company, US Army) – stirred by the horrors of 9/11 and what he had seen on the TV, Matt enlisted. He was issued his size 12 boots and clothes to fit his 6’ 2”, 220 pound, body.

Matt was deployed and served in his company, until, after a routine patrol, he was listed as missing in action on the 9th April, 2004.

Matt’s family, particularly his parents Keith and Carolyn, remembered every day, in fact so tirelessly, that they set up campaigns and news broadcasts to keep the news of their missing son (along with 4 other soldiers) in the public mind.

They founded the famous Yellow Ribbon charity, which supports service-people by providing care packages and much needed luxuries to serving personnel. And throughout it all, they never stopped remembering.

On the 29th March 2008, Matt was found... but not alive as the family had hoped. What remained of Matt’s body was repatriated to the US and funeral preparations were made by the devastated family.

In this final act of public remembrance, the family held an open funeral for their son – Matt. All the arrangements were left to the attention of the director.

On the day of the funeral, having driven past the local church, Carolyn (Matt’s mother) asked the driver where he was going – he just answered “please trust me Madam”.

When the car stopped, Carolyn and the rest of the family were lead, not to a church or hall, but to a baseball stadium, filled to capacity and beyond with people coming together to remember and be thankful for the life and service that Matt laid down for his country.

On days like today, Matt’s family remember, as they do every day, the horrors of war, and I do have to wonder if the people in that stadium were affected to the point of wanting to remember more often? And I wonder if we are too? Do we take on the message of days like today as a reminder to remember?

It is not good enough to remember the story of the widow of Zarepath or poor lady & two cooper coin. They made choice and it had a cost. What choice are we ready to make for the Lord Jesus?