

Remembrance Sunday Sermon

Texts: *Ecclesiastes 3:1–8; Matthew 5:1–12*

Theme: *A Time for Peace, A Call to Peacemaking*

1. A Time to Remember

Today, we gather as a people of memory and hope — to remember, to give thanks, and to pray for peace.

As one **born in India** and now a **British citizen**, I stand before you deeply aware that I did not live through the World Wars, nor belong to the generation directly affected by them. Yet I speak today because we live in the peace and freedom purchased by the courage of those who gave their lives in those terrible conflicts.

We remember not only those from Britain, but also the millions from across the **Commonwealth** — from India, Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Australia, and beyond — who stood alongside the British Army in the struggle for peace, freedom, and justice.

Many never returned home. Many more carried their wounds in silence. Together, their courage shaped the world we now inhabit.

As the writer of **Ecclesiastes** reminds us:

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time for war, and a time for peace.”

Today is our time — to mourn, to give thanks, and to seek peace once again.

2. A Time to Mourn — and to Hope

We remember the cost of human conflict — lives lost, families broken, and nations scarred.

And we pray for those caught in the wars of our own time:

for **Ukraine and Russia**, where cities lie in ruins;

for **Israel and Gaza**, where hatred and fear destroy countless lives.

We pray that leaders will find courage to choose mercy, and that compassion may prevail over vengeance.

From the beginning, God has called his people to something greater than mere survival or defence. Ancient **Israel**, too, wrestled with questions of nationhood, blessing, and boundaries. They longed to protect their identity — yet God called them to be a **blessing to all nations**, a people whose justice, compassion, and faith would reveal the character of God to the world.

Through the **harvest laws, sabbatical rest, and Jubilee years**, God taught that the earth belongs to Him — to be shared fairly, cared for justly, and enjoyed by all, especially the poor and the marginalized.

That same vision calls us today: to protect not only our own but the dignity of all humanity.

3. Jesus and the Universal Call of Love

Into that ancient story, **Jesus** was born — rooted in a particular culture, nation, and family. Yet he transformed what was particular into a universal call to love. He said:

“Love your neighbour as yourself,”
and even more radically,
“Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”

Jesus broke down barriers between peoples, turning boundaries into bridges. Through his parables, his healing, and his forgiveness, he showed that the life of God is breathed into every human being — and that every person, regardless of race or nation, bears God’s image and deserves dignity.

The early Christians followed that same path: they began as a small group bound by faith and culture, yet they transcended every barrier to bring the good news of Christ to the world. Their faith became a universal invitation — to peace, mercy, and reconciliation.

4. Blessed Are the Peacemakers

In our gospel reading, Jesus blesses those who the world often overlooks:

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted...
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

The **Beatitudes** offer us a vision of peace built not on power, but on love; not on control, but on compassion.

To be a peacemaker is to share God’s own heart — to bring hope where there is despair, to build understanding where there is ignorance, and to love even when the world teaches fear.

In our time — when nations are divided, when rhetoric fuels hatred, and when the fear of the “other” grows stronger — Jesus’ words are more urgent than ever.

Love is not weakness.

It is the most powerful act of faith.

It transforms enemies into neighbours, and strangers into brothers and sisters.

5. Remembering Those Who Serve

As we remember the fallen, we also remember those who **serve today** — in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and peacekeeping missions around the world.

Their dedication protects not only our nation but the principles of peace and freedom for all.

We pray for their safety, for their families, and for those veterans among us who still bear the marks of service — in body, mind, or memory.

Their commitment continues the legacy of those who came before them — a reminder that peace is not passive; it is built through courage, sacrifice, and compassion.

6. A Time for Peace

Ecclesiastes says, "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak."

In our silence today, we honour the dead.

In our speaking, we recommit ourselves to the work of peace.

The final word of history does not belong to war — it belongs to God.

It belongs to the **Prince of Peace**, whose love crosses every border and whose mercy is without end.

Until that day comes — when swords are beaten into ploughshares and nations learn war no more — let us live as people of gratitude and grace.

Let us defend the dignity of all, love beyond fear, and seek peace in our homes, our communities, and our world.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

May this be our remembrance, our prayer, and our calling — today and always.

Amen.