**Hear the word of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke ….**

**5**Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, **6“As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”**

**7**“Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

**8**He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. 9When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

10Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

12“But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13And so you will bear testimony to me.

14But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

16You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.  17Everyone will hate you because of me.  18But not a hair of your head will perish. 19Stand firm, and you will win life.

**This is the Gospel of the Lord…**

***Sermon for Remembrance Sunday***

* Today we remember people – some very close to us – who have lost their lives defending their country.
* We thank God for our deliverance in the most dangerous times of our history
* And, perhaps, we reflect on how it is - that, in a world which we believe to be governed by the rule of God, wars have become possible – and this leads us to an expression of our deepest longings for peace and safety.

We cry**, “In a world so full of hatred and violence – where, O Lord is the peace that passes all understanding?”**

The **Revd. Leslie Milton** in his sermon preached on this day in 2003 described the situation in the Northeast of France in the two World Wars – 1914 and 1939.

The area was overrun by the Germans who believed they were liberating a part of Germany.

The young men of the area were conscripted into the German army where they fought and died.

Nowadays, in the rest of France, the War Memorials read in the memory of those that died:

**“Pour la Patrie”**

But in Alsace they read:

**“A nos Morts”** (To our dead)

Today our country is involved in armed conflict in places all around the world and, for each of them, we might ask the question,

**“Is this a just war?”**

It is interesting to study the passage from the book of Jonah, chapter 3, verses 6-9.

* The prophet has forth-told God’s call for repentance.
* The king heeds God’s call.
* The king repents and calls the people to repent with him and turn from violence – “Who knows”, he says, “God may relent and change his mind – He may turn from His fierce anger, so that we do not perish.”

I wonder if there’s a lesson for us **here**.

In a democracy, **do we not all** bear some responsibility for the conduct of the nation?

But all of this does not lessen, IN ANY WAY, our gratitude and deep respect for the faithfulness and courage of the men and women of our armed services.

I want to present to you today three notions – descriptions and characteristics of the people engaged in the services.

**OBEDIENCE SACRIFICE SALVATION**

Firstly **OBEDIENCE.**

One of the first things a new recruit learns is the nature of an **ORDER** and of the necessary and instant response to it.

**In the heat of battle, a soldier does not debate the wisdom or correctness of an order --**

If the platoon sergeant shouts, **“DOWN”**, those who hesitate are in grave danger!!! Obedience saves lives!

We all love our heroes and so we might ask, **“Who is the most obedient person the world has ever known?”** And, as any Sunday school teacher knows, the answer is **“Jesus”.**

Obedient to death – even death upon the Cross – for our redemption. Not the off-chance of a bullet that might hit anyone or, perhaps, no-one -- but a slow, certain death of torture which he could have avoided.

There are not many of us who have the courage to put ourselves in “Harms way” as does the soldier.

Secondly **SACRIFICE**:

Jesus went to the Cross in obedience to His Father – for a reason – the redemption of mankind.

The soldiers also make sacrifices – they are called to lose control of their lives – to be taken anywhere in the world – a real strain on families and friends.

They are called to kill as well as to die – a frightful prospect to all of us.

But , as Christians, we, too are soldiers – soldiers of Christ. We, too are in conflict with **“The principalities and powers of this dark world”**

There is sacrifice when we invite Jesus Christ to be our **Friend, Saviour, and Lord.** We voluntarily give up the control of our lives to our Almighty, all powerful and all-loving God.

Finally, there **is SALVATION**:

We know, of course, that Jesus died on the Cross to save us from the consequence of our sinfulness – which is ETERNAL DEATH. We are saved to ETERNAL LIFE.

But what about those in the armed forces?

Did they save us from any consequences?

And here we return to our own responsibilities as citizens of a free country.

**“Yes,”** we should be able to say**, “They died for our freedom – our PEACE.”** And when we put our brave men and women into “Harms way” we need to remember that.

The question has been asked whether **REMEMBRACE DAY** is still relevant to our post-modern society, and the answer to this is, I believe, contained in a poem written by a 13 year old girl, Rebecca Sullivan, entitled **“There Lie Forgotten Men”.** She had been to an exhibition of the First World War, and wrote this:

**She stands there alone**

**At the edge of the silent place, And she is shocked.**

**New wars brew and these forgotten men**

**Will play no part in them**

**The dead silence warns no ears but hers.**

**In great halls, in moments of great decision**

**What they fought for is forsaken**

**And by day’s end new gravestones**

**Appear on the blood-red ground.**

**She finds what she seeks,**

**“Sgt John Malley age 27” His life brutally ended**

**And she stands by his grave**

**But he can give no answers**

**And she weeps for him --**

**For the empty hole that he left behind**

**And for the new emptiness**

**Soon to join the black chasm.**

**And her tears join the flood.**

Let us pray:

Lord, today we pray for a shattered world, some of us for shattered lives.

Lord, we are reminded that we need to put our hands in your hand and step out into the unknown.

Lead us, Lord, to a better place. **Amen.**