

Cell Notes: Remembrance Sunday 2018.

Centenary of the end of WWI

Sunday, November 11th 2018 is a historic date of great importance. WWI, which changed the course of European and world history, ended on this day 100 years ago. I started praying and thinking about this in August. I like to be prepared, but I am not usually *that* prepared. However as a (*very minor*) historian, I was aware of what a hugely important date this is in UK, European and World history. So I started thinking about, and reading around, the event because it is so significant.

However, there was something else too, that caused it to be on my mind for some time. As I look around at the world in which we live, I increasingly feel we are living at a 'cross roads' point in history and that future generations will look back on the decade following 2008 (the Financial Crash) as one that changed the course of history. It was while I was reflecting on this, that God guided me to the passage in Ezekiel that is so challenging, as it calls on us to read the signs of the times (and warn when these look likely to lead to danger & conflict) and not just follow the trends. In other words: to think critically about what we might find ourselves part of...look around at what something is (or may well be) leading to ...and ask the key questions: "*Is this likely to lead to conflict?*", "*Is this really on the side of the angels?*" That can be a very challenging & uncomfortable thing to do. This is because we are called to be 'Watchmen and women on the wall...' On the Centenary of the end of WWI, and in an increasingly fractious and divided world, this seems very pressing indeed.

Attached is the full text of my sermon, for anyone who might have been away on Sunday or who wishes to read it in full. However, I realise that you may have a busy week and so **here are the main points of it in brief:**

- On the Centenary of the end of WWI, it is right to remember with gratitude those who laid down their lives to defend freedoms that we often take for granted.
- It is also a time to resolve that we will strive to ensure it does not happen again. We commit ourselves to peace.
- The world in 2018 is more divided, fractious, unsettled and unstable than at any time since the end of the Cold War in 1989-90. And all the evidence indicates that it is becoming more so. As Christians (as 'Watchmen on the wall') we are called to be insightful, courageous (and if necessary, counter-cultural) in our commitment to peace, reconciliation, cooperation, kindness and justice. These are tough things to do, if they involve challenging contemporary attitudes and trends; but to that we are called.

Reading Ezekiel 33: 1-6.

33 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 'Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: "When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4 then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. 5 Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood."

Applying the scripture:

1. What are the most important insights that we, as Christians, bring to Remembrance Sunday?
2. Why is God so demanding of the 'Watchman on the wall'?
3. Looking at our contemporary world, in November 2018, what things might we (as Watchmen) be warning our society about? In short, where can we see things developing that could well lead to future conflict in the world community?
4. Pray about these things. And about our responses to them, as Christians.