

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

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Date: 10 November 2024

Preacher: Simon Jackson

- [0 : 0 0] I'm going to all come up and read for you. Our reading for today is from Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verses 1-8, a very well-known chapter.
- There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a time to uproot. A time to kill, and a time to heal.
- A time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh. A time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatterstones, and a time to gather them.
- A time to embrace, and a time to refrain. A time to search, and a time to give up. A time to keep, and a time to throw away. A time to tear, and a time to mend.
- A time to be silent, a time to speak, a time to love, a time to hate, a time for war, a time for peace. Amen. May God bless you as a sweet peace.
- [1 : 1 6] Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you. And it's made it through the crowd, but at least it's there as a witness and a living museum to tell people about it.
- About ten years ago, Megan, my daughter, and I went, and I went primarily to show Megan the Holocaust Museum, because they had a really good display.
- And things have changed somewhat in that museum. Really massive. And I found myself having a great day.
- [3 : 2 2] It really was a great day. And as I was walking around, I thought, Remembrance Sunday is going to be coming up very, very soon.
- And I need some resources. I really do. So, in the shop, I bought a couple of books. One that you've already heard from this morning.
- And it's a book of poetry to celebrate Remembrance Sunday, to help us remember. And I think, as a society, we've lost quite a lot by not reading poetry.
- It can be a beautiful way of remembering. And the other book I got was the first day on the song.
- And I don't know why I got it. I just did. It was maybe that prompt that we all get now and again. And I was also prompted to turn to a particular page.
- [4 : 3 3] And it's called Zero Hour. And I would like to read it to you. There's two pages in math that I would like to read to you this morning. So, it's a book by Martin the Middle Group.
- The start of the chapter is Zero Hour. Exactly at 7.30am, an uncanny silence fell over the battlefield.
- The British barrage suddenly ceased as it lifted from the German front line and gun layers adjusted their sights for their next target.
- By a strange coincidence, the German guns, too, were silent. It was eerie. The sun was shining out of a cloudless sky.

Birds hovered and swooped over the trenches, singing clearly. To the men, it seemed a weird anticlimax.

[5 : 38] Suddenly, for a few seconds, all seemed silent. The firing had quieted down. I walked up and down the footboard, saying to the men, It's all over.

I had almost a feeling of disappointment. It was short-lived. And that wee comment was from Lieutenant Asquith, from the 1st of Barnstead Powell's.

After a few seconds, the quiet was shattered, as the British barrage fell upon the next line of enemy defences. In their own trenches, whistles blew, shouts came from the platoon and section commanders.

The battle of the Somme had started. The first away were those lying out in no man's land. The long lines rose.

Men looked to left and right as if to correct their dressing on a parade ground, and sent off after their officers, at the steady, well-rehearsed pace, towards the enemy.

[6 : 46] There was no rushing. No shouting. For most, however, it was a case of over the top. First up the ladders were the platoon commanders.

Behind them, the heavily loaded men, struggled to get in quickly, urged on by those falling. Officers ran along the parapet, shouting encouragement, leaning in, and giving a hand to pull the overburdened soldiers up and out.

Before these men could form up in their waves, they first had to pass through their own barbed wire defences. Some units took duckboards over them and placed those on the wire to make bridges.

But most had to file through paths cut the previous night before they could get out into the boat room. Now that the action had begun, most men lost their fear.

They knew what they had to do. Their friends were all around them, their officers leading. They pushed it through the wire and took their places in their waves.

[8 : 04] The Germans, however, were alert. Their reaction was swift and deadly. An attacker at Goncourt could hear a bugle as a lookout called the Germans from their dugouts to man the trenches.

The first machine guns were soon in action and found easy targets. British soldiers struggling out of their trenches were hit and tumbled back, some dead before they fell.

Private Carter from the first Bradford Pals later wrote, The German machine gun fire was terrible. Our colonel was hit after only a few steps along the trench.

I helped to prop him up against the trench side. Then we climbed onto the top of the trench. I had not reached my full height when a machine gun bullet smacked into my steel helmet.

I felt as if I had been hit with a sledgehammer. I caught glimpse of my helmet and it was completely smashed in. The Germans spotted some of the gaps in the British wire and their machine guns soon turned these narrow alleys into death rooms.

[9 : 26] Men trying to avoid their dead and wounded comrades got caught and were themselves hit. In spite of the unexpected opposition there was no hesitation as more and more men left the trenches and if they could formed up into their waves they were bewildered.

The Germans were all supposed to be dead. Now the reason I read that for you this morning is to bring a sense of reality into what us in a peace loving nation have lived life for a number of years.

I read that today because today as you know is Remembrance Sunday. And as we distance ourselves from the Great War through time it's easy to forget that in this first war this first world war that man used machines of war on himself with horrific results.

It's hard to look back and think of our descendants probably loving gentlemen in times of peace and killing other men in a war that was meant to end all wars.

But that sadly is what happens. as I prepared for this service I came upon that passage that was read to us earlier and maybe just maybe it certainly gave me a better understanding and I hope you will gain better understanding of what I've read to you.

[11 : 43] I'd like to read that passage again. There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.

A time to be born and a time to die a time to plant and a time to uproot a time to kill and a time to heal a time to tear down and a time to build a time to weep and a time to laugh a time to mourn and a time to dance a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing a time to search and a time to give up a time to keep and a time to throw away a time to tear and a time to mend a time to be silent and a time to speak a time to love and a time to hate a time for war and a time to peace and a time to peace

Father at times we can't understand the reason war and a time to time to endure both on and off the battlefield and for those at home Lord we can only imagine what it must have been like to receive that telegram that we are today to know that one of their sons is not coming home Lord thank you for your word thank you for your word in helping us to come to terms of things we sometimes can't understand we've heard today about the horrors of war and it's quite right we do remember those who have sacrificed themselves for us but we also have to think about telling others why we do church what our

Lord and Master means to us and how he helps us through a limited understanding of our world and it is limited we are learning through powers of science we are learning about our world but it's very limited we have to think about how God what God means to us in our daily lives and I want to go straight to the word of God just now I want to go to 2nd Timothy chapter 4 verse 2 preach the word be ready in season and out of season what does that mean what does that mean well to me it means faith and faith as you know is a verb it's a doing word it's a doing word and I want to tell you a true story at least

I believe it's true and it was said to me not that long ago now some of you will remember in the 1970s a man called Robert Shuler and he was a pioneer he was a pioneer in America because he set up the first TV evangelist station some of you may remember him and he used to preach the word and have uplifting hymns and all the rest of it so that's our first cast member there was Robert Shuler now does any of you recognise this chap here ok does anybody recognise that for those of the younger set that is John Wayne John Wayne a tremendously successful Hollywood star big man like myself quite a few movies to his name he's actually called

[16 : 37] Marion in real life and his folks came from the Isle of Lewis now John Wayne was a huge fan of Robert Shuler's TV station huge fan and he heard one day Robert Shuler telling everybody on television that his 15 year old daughter Cindy had been involved in a motorcycle accident and in that accident it had been a horrific accident and she lost her leg ok so she was in the hospital and she had her her leg amputated now in those days there was no text there was no phones people communicated with each other by sending letters or little notes and John Wayne thought it would be a great hit me up if he was to send

Cindy Robert Shuler's daughter a little note now typical bloke it was short and sweet and I'll read it to you dear Cindy sorry to hear about your accident hope you'll be alright John Wayne quite short quite the point and it was delivered to her in hospital and Cindy read it and she thought she'd like to reply so she wrote John Wayne a note back and I'll read it to you dear Mr.

Wayne I got your note thanks for writing to me I like you very much I'm going to be alright because Jesus is going to help me Mr.

Wayne do you know Jesus I sure hope you know Jesus Mr. Wayne because I can't imagine heaven being complete without John Wayne being there I hope if you don't know Jesus you will give your heart to Jesus right now see you in heaven love Cindy okay now she put that envelope she put that note in an envelope and mark it John Wayne and put it on the bed that you get in a hospital you know that goes over your whole bed she put it there and then somebody came in a visitor and this is what I call a God incidence not coincidence a God incidence and this chap came in to visit Cindy and he was talking to her and looked down and saw the address the envelope address to John Wayne and he said what's this and she says oh I've written to

John Wayne and I don't know how to get it to him well he says that's funny I'm having dinner with him tonight at the Newport club if you like I can take it oh that would be very nice she said so she gave the envelope to the man and off he went to Newport beach for his dinner now that night there was 12 of them sitting in the Newport club and they were having dinner and there was a lot of laughing and a lot of joking as you can imagine and the chap was feeling it was Jackie Wocco there's his envelope so remember John Wayne's nickname was Duke wasn't it you remember that and so this guy shouted down hey Duke this is a letter from Robert Shuler's daughter so they sent it down to the end of the table and they noticed

[20 : 38] John started to read it and they were talking away and then they noticed that John Wayne was trying and they asked him the guy shouted down the table he said Duke are you okay and he said he replied he said I want to read you this letter so he read you earlier he folded the bit of paper up and put it in his pocket and he said to the man I want you to go and tell that little girl that in this restaurant right here right there John Wayne gives his heart to Jesus and I will see her in heaven now you know this

John Wayne died three weeks after and he died a believer and he died a Christian that's the important thing we need to remember we need to tell our story not only by words but that needs really important I hope that story has blessed you richly this morning I really do and it's important that you tell somebody about that as well let's have our prayers let's pray oh father we remember those whose lives have been torn apart by wars by terrorism in humanity we remember the holocaust victims victims of genocide and ethnic cleansing come lord god come lord jesus come holy spirit we remember those whose lives have been blighted by the carelessness and the apathy of others we remember children whose toil makes our treasures deprivation feeds our delight lives we remember those who have endured injustice and untruths and malicious slander we remember those who have had good things spoiled or taken away but our pleasure come lord god come lord jesus come holy spirit father we pray for the united nations the peace keepers everywhere we pray for the red cross and the royal british legion and all who care for the wounded and the weary father we judge with justice and equity we pray for ourselves and people of faith everywhere that we might be led to make fewer errors of judgement and a greater effort to live lives that please you and give us a glimpse of your glory we pray for our minister brian and his family for you fill him with holy spirit and strength and father we pray that prayer that your son jesus taught us while he was here on this earth our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debts and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom that power and the glory forever amen through