

The Ultimate Peace

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[0 : 00] Ingled in Romans 5-7, because of a good thing, perhaps because of a good issue, a man will dare to die.

And so they dared to die. But there's somebody missing in church this morning. He's gray-haired and 58 years old.

And he's a grandfather whose child might have been baptized this morning. And he stands erect. But the fact is, he's not here because the candlesticks in the chancel are a memorial to him.

He died in the Air Force when he was still in his early 20s. That's why he's not here. And the reason I tell you this is because I think Remembrance Day creates a tremendous cleavage between young people and older people.

It creates a split between the generations because young people don't understand that picture up there. And many who have stood in that place do understand it.

[1 : 22] And perhaps it's seared on their minds and hearts as the most important event in the whole of their lives. And then along comes another generation, which goes back and looks at it and finds out that during the time of war, the Japanese of the West Coast were interned.

And even in the newspaper this week, there was news of a book written by a young lady who spent her childhood in such an internment camp. And then they look at the saturation bombings in Germany.

They look at the bombing, the atomic bombs in Japan. Then they look at the horrors of Auschwitz. And then they discover one by one that most of the great heroes of the war were slightly psychopathic, and that's what made them heroes.

And there's a kind of terrible backlash of guilt and recrimination between one generation and another because the newer generation probably feels that they wouldn't have done such things.

They wouldn't have tolerated such things. And a kind of poignant and glamorous reminder of this was confronted us all when the Ranger aircraft carrier parked in English Bay last weekend.

[3 : 00] And you're forced to recognize that the whole history of man is a history of eternal monuments to decaying empires.

It's a strange reality. The monuments remain in bronze and stone of another day and another time, but the freedoms they fought for tend to decay because one generation doesn't understand what the other generation thought was important.

It's good, isn't it, that we were reminded of that in the Old Testament lesson this morning. And it's good that we should be reminded to pray that we might not think ourselves wiser than our fathers.

That we're not going to save our generation and try and say that our generation is innocent by heaping scorn and guilt on another generation.

Now, the whole history of man at its best and at its noblest, I think is summarized by what Paul says in Romans when he says, perhaps for a good cause, one man will dare to die.

[4 : 51] And you see, it's the way it's happened. Can I read to you again what I read to you a couple of weeks ago? The conclusion of a man who watched the world war and now, years later, looks back and says, The weak work for the strong and if they have no strength or will to work, then let them steal or let them die.

There is no crime that a man will not commit in order to save himself. And having saved himself, he will commit crimes for increasingly trivial reasons.

He will commit them first out of duty, then from habit, and finally for pleasure. This world is ruled by neither justice nor morality.

Crime is not punished nor virtue rewarded. One is forgotten as quickly as the other. The world is ruled by power.

Power belongs to the person who holds the most powerful, ultimate weapon.

[6 : 09] You know that more than 3,000 years ago, a man came home to his wife having had forged for him a club and he brandished and waved the club in front of his wife and in the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis, these are his words.

He says to her, I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly, Lamech, seventy-sevenfold. Since he waved that iron club forged by the skill of a man, he's been improving on that club ever since.

Until now, that club is so devastatingly powerful that our minds can't even begin to comprehend. And the idea of one man slaying 77 to avenge himself has now been increased that one man can slay an astronomical number, could even eliminate the whole of this planet as a form of sadistic revenge.

Because man is a killer and the ultimate power belongs to the ultimate weapon. Well, that's the way the world is.

[8 : 05] And you can't turn up the history of any nation or any empire without discovering that the raw and brutal use of power was the way by which that kingdom was established.

And there are lots of practical-minded people in the world who know that that reality is not going to change while history remains.

And yet, what does it mean? The highest and noblest concept is that which Paul gives.

Perhaps for a good man one would dare to die. And probably the best in our culture and the best in our civilization and the thing which we hope will somehow be vindicated is that good thing for which men have chosen to die and which they have been in the midst of the blood and beastliness and power brokers of our world have forged something which is good and something which we can hold on to.

But even that ultimately is transient. that's the most that we can do. But you see that picture is given to us as a background against which another picture is to be superimposed.

[9 : 57] The picture of a man who for good cause will dare dare to die and such men are commemorated in memorial throughout this church.

But there is another side and another picture which is imposed upon this. You've heard the discussion of unilateral disarmament and practical men spit it out on the ground when it is suggested to because that's not the way history works.

But there is a sense in which it is the way history works. And the unilateral disarmament is described exquisitely for us in the same verses of Paul's letter.

And it says while we were still weak at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And the picture is one in which we are portrayed as weak while we are portrayed as sinners and not just sinners in that we've made a mistake but sinners in the sense that we have consciously contradicted the law that we know.

[11 : 50] That we have been in rebellion against the rule of God in our hearts. That we have chosen a world in which crime is not punished and virtue is not rewarded.

Sinful in that sense. Weak in the sense that there's nothing we can do about it. The only kind of strength we know is the strength which is superbly represented by the USS rangers parked in English Bay.

That's the only kind of strength we ultimately know. Apart from that where we can help, we are sinners and we are at enmity with God.

And God chose to attack us and to wreak revenge upon us for our enmity, for our helplessness, for our conscious disobedience of all that he called us to be.

God launched an attack upon us and in the forefront of that attack stands the person of Jesus Christ. And he won a great battle by laying down his life for us.

[13 : 30] Not for the good, not for the good man, but he laid down his life for those who were in rebellion against him those who were his enemies, those who were weak and helpless to help themselves.

He in a sin, he fought the battle and he laid down his life and achieved a great victory, the only ultimate victory, victory.

Because it wasn't just a victory over principalities, over powers, over the rulers of the darkness of this world.

It was a victory over death itself. And he won that victory by choosing and in deliberate obedience to the father laying down his life for us.

The endless process in history of power, overpowering power from generation to generation goes on.

[14 : 54] Romans 5 says, therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the final and ultimate peace. That's the ground of reconciliation which has been established. that is the only ground which in the whole course of human history, people can meet on to find forgiveness, to find healing, to find renewal by this victory which Christ won by submitting to death and overcoming.

you see, and I, it just seems to me that you can't go without saying the victory into which these children were baptized this morning is that victory which Christ has won.

In the course of their lives, they will become involved in the process of thinking that they are wiser than their father they will become involved in the inevitable power struggle.

But they are now in accordance with the promises made and the commitment made, they are now entering on the booty, if you want, that comes from the victory which Jesus Christ has won.

[16 : 54] And now for them as the disciples of Christ, there is a new reality which must break in upon their lives and which they must understand as somebody who, looking through all the darkness and perversity of our time, sees and understand what Jesus said in John's gospel, greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend, so you must lay down your lives for one another.

life. The only reason that you have been given a life is that you may lay it down. And the only hope you have in laying it down is that you lay it down in obedience to Jesus Christ and for the sake of his kingdom, so that the revolution and the war which you're committed to is not the political power structure of nation against nation, but to go against the weakness and the enmity and the deliberate disobedience of the men and women of your generation and to tell them of the victory that has been won through Christ laying down his life for us.

That's the missionary trust of the church and that's the mission to which you are commissioned. The love that has been shown to you in Jesus Christ and which you have accepted by your baptism, you are now to demonstrate greater love than no man has, that he lay down his life for his friends.

You are to lay down your lives for one another. That's the ultimate reality for us. we commemorate those who in their bravery and in the highest function of man in relationship to man, dared to die and lost the dare.

We, in obedience to Jesus Christ, must be willing to lay down our lives, not to establish any earthly kingdom, that men might know the kingdom which God has established in Jesus Christ, and that men may be partakers of that kingdom.

[20 : 17] He that soweth little shall reap little, he that soweth plentifully shall reap plentifully, that every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudging or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

We're to sing now hymn number 321. one. I've got to unhook my stuff here.

Thanks, Jr. dozen P. ss shops as as be to say Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[23 : 29] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[26 : 19] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[29 : 59] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.