

Stokesley Methodist Church



Sunday 10th November 2019

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

10.00am Morning Worship led by Rev Andrew Robinson

10.45am Parade to War Memorial

6.00pm Evening Worship at
Town Close led by Lesley Jackson

A Gathering Prayer from the Roots Resources

We come together in the presence of God who cares for us,
who gives us a place of refuge.

We come together knowing that we can find protection in the shadow
of his wings.

We come as the body of Christ, gathered together in him, caring for
one another and making space for each other to grow.

Living God, we come to you with open hands, longing to hear from you.

Answer us, O God, as we call upon you today.

We know that our Redeemer lives,
and it is he we go out to serve.

May the living God be seen in us in all we think and do and say.

Amen

Lectionary Readings:

Haggai 1 v15b – 2 v9 A Call to Build the House of the Lord/The
Promised Glory of the New House

Psalms 145 v1-5, 17-21 The Lord is righteous in all his ways

2 Thessalonians 2 v1-5, 13-17 The Man of Lawlessness/Stand Firm

Luke 20 v27-38 The Resurrection and Marriage

Don't Be Shaken

This week our focus is on being gathered together in Christ & on
recognising the truth. The Thessalonians have been shaken by a
message that 'the day of the Lord is already here', so they are
reminded of the good news. Jesus will return at the right time,
and for now he is strengthening them in word and deed.

Those addressed in 2 Thessalonians are facing a number of
difficulties. They are suffering persecution because they prioritise
God's kingdom over the Roman Empire (1 v5). They have been
disturbed by a message 'that the day of the Lord is already here'
(2 v2), and some of the community have abandoned work (3 v11).
The recipients of 1 Thessalonians worried that some had died
before the Lord's coming. Paul, while reassuring them that the day
of the Lord would come soon, also told them that already 'we
belong to the day', and that Christ died for us 'so we may live in
him' (1 Thessalonians 4 v13 – 5 v11). Interpreting that first letter
'by spirit' or 'by word' of prophecy, and perhaps producing their
own version 'as though from us', some thought Paul's second
point negated his first, and there was no more to expect and
prepare for. Some have withdrawn from the world of work,
leaving others to cope with its pressures, and have spent their
time in intense worship and shared emotions.

2 Thessalonians addresses this situation, saying there is a future

day of the Lord to prepare for, dismissing the withdrawal from the world as 'living in idleness, mere busybodies' (3 v11).

1 Thessalonians had said that 'the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (5 v2). But now that some believe it has already come, 2 Thessalonians draws on apocalyptic chronology to argue that, since even the preliminaries have not begun, it is certainly in the future. This point made, the letter returns to thanksgiving for what has already happened, for their being chosen and called by the God who loves them, and for what is yet to happen as the Spirit continues to transform their lives. They were called through 'our gospel', as Paul lived out the good news he proclaimed. And, as 'the first fruits for salvation', they are good news for those in the world of idolatry and immorality around them, as God in Christ encourages and strengthens them in both what they say and what they do.

What do you see when you look at a glass half full of water? Some would say the glass is half full and others would say it is half empty. Which do you think is correct? Is the glass half full or half empty? We can probably agree that both answers are correct. You can look at the glass and see it half full of water or you can look at the glass and declare that it is half empty. This is where we have a choice. Do you think it is best to think about the glass half full or half empty? The problem with seeing the glass as half empty is that it is a negative way of thinking.

People who see the glass as half empty may be people who look at situations and think the worst. Seeing the glass as half full is a way of trying to make the best of what is happening.

We all can find things that disturb us and cause us worry and that doesn't feel good. It gets in the way of having fun and enjoying life, but remember that we all have a choice about the way we think.

In the Bible, the apostle, Paul talks to a group of new Christians. They are just learning how to live with God's love. They are just like us.

Paul encourages the new Christians and tells them that God loves them. He says God comforts and gives hope that will last forever. You can "comfort your heart" (2 Thessalonians 2 v16) and get rid of some of that worry by remembering that you are filled with God's love. See your life as full and overflowing.

The Sadducees were associated with the high priestly aristocracy (Acts 4 v1; 5 v17), and identified as Jesus' principal adversaries in Jerusalem (Luke 9 v22; 19 v47; 20 v19; 22 v52). Luke notes that the Sadducees denied the resurrection, telling us that Paul exploited their disagreement with the Pharisees on this point (Acts 23 v1-10). Here they use scriptural levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25 v5-10) to make resurrection seem ridiculous. But Jesus reads Scripture to say that the centre of our human relationships must be our relationship with God, revealed to Moses as still the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3 v6). Those who are alive to the living God are entering 'that age' of the people of God who will never die.

The links between these lectionary readings:

Paul tells the Thessalonians that, although they are puzzled about 'the day of the Lord', God loves them and strengthens them. Jesus urges the disputatious Sadducees to see that what really matters is that we are alive to the living God.

A Sending Out Prayer:

We know that our Redeemer lives, and it is he we go out to serve. May the living God be seen in us in all we think and do and say.

Amen.