

Accomplished!

Job 19²³⁻²⁷; Psalm 171⁻⁸; 2 Thessalonians 21^{-5,13-end}; Luke 20²⁷⁻³⁸

*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth....
Then in my flesh shall I see God.... My heart faints within me!
[Job 19²⁵⁻²⁷]*

I count myself significantly blessed that I have never had to live through either of the major conflicts in the 20th century where life at home as well as on the battlefield was both threatened and disrupted. Yet, it is the case that the world has never been at peace, not often before that time and certainly not after it. As you know we have lads who are in the armed forces and I have told them bluntly that the medal I never want to see is the Elizabeth Medal, the decoration initiated by Her Majesty the Queen and is awarded to the families of those who die in the service of their country.

Because of the freedom that has been won for us, I also ask the question, 'what has any war really accomplished beyond pain and devastation and loss?' It is important that we look back with thanksgiving, but is it possible that we can look forward in hope?

Whilst the Apostle Paul warns us about becoming over-anxious about things that happen around us and the Psalmist prays for personal vindication, it is Jesus message, backed up by Job, where we are given hope. The bold statement **He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.**

- ✠ On a day that remembers so much carnage, this is a message of hope: all of those listed on our memorial and memorials up and down the country - they are alive to God.
- ✠ On a day that remembers the evil in the world, so often personified in those who command unthinking followers, this is a message of hope. Those who set themselves up in place of God are **destined for destruction.**

It is important for us, listening to so many people jostling for power and influence as we approach a general election, that we are alert to those voices that are negative and evil and equally alert to hear the voices raised for justice and peace: it is our Christian duty to engage and to vote!

- ✠ On a day that has been so filled with painful memories - my Grannie's brother was killed in WWI and she never recovered, and I remember the Bunworth sisters in my first Church, all 7 of whom had lost those to whom they were engaged in WWII and who lived together in their ongoing grief and loss - it is that hope of resurrection that is the lens that assists us to look forward in hope.

The Church of Christ honours those who sacrifice, but we don't see death, we see life. It is vital that we proclaim the resurrection and to do so with conviction, with such conviction that it makes a difference to how we live and how we die.