

**ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING**  
**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE WITH COMMUNION**  
**10.30 AM 10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

**REV DR JULIA BINNEY LEADING & REV DR JIM BINNEY PREACHING**

[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk).

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**THEME:** The Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Mark – Love and the Kingdom (Mark 12:28-34)

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

The love of God holds this world together.  
The peace of God brings hope to the world.

**We are here to worship our good and faithful God who, in this world of conflict and pain, shows us how to live rightly, in peace, in service, in love.**

**HYMN BP&W 374 (ADAPTED):**

God is Love: let heaven adore him;  
God is Love: let earth rejoice;  
let creation sing before him,  
and exalt him with one voice.  
He who laid the earth's foundation,  
he who spread the heavens above,  
he who breathes through all creation,  
he is Love, eternal Love.

God is Love: and he enfolds us  
all the world in one embrace;  
with unfailing grasp God holds us  
every child of every race.  
And when human hearts are breaking  
under sorrow's iron rod,  
then they find that self-same aching  
deep within the heart of God.

God is Love: and though with blindness  
sin afflicts all human life

God's eternal loving-kindness  
guides us through our earthly life.  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
o'er us final triumph gain;  
God is Love, so Love for ever  
o'er the universe must reign.

TIMOTHY REES (1874-1939) ALTD. BASED ON 1 JOHN 4:8

**A PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING:**

Loving God, we praise you for all you have done for us in Christ, for your victory through him over sin and evil, darkness and death.

**We praise you for your infinite love which cannot be kept down, whatever it may face, whatever may conspire against it.**

Sovereign God, you are the source and sustainer of our lives, from you all things come and to you all things lead.

**We praise you for you are always with us, surrounding us with your love.**

Merciful God, you are full of loving kindness, tenderness and grace towards all you have made.

**We praise you for your constant care and comfort and thank you for your forgiveness offered to us in and through Jesus Christ.**

As we remember today those who gave their lives in and though war, we thank you for the sacrifice of your Son upon the cross, that through his death we have life and true freedom.

**Accept our worship, touch our hearts with the nearness of your presence, deepen our faith, strengthen our commitment, broaden our vision, so that we may grow as your people and play our part in working for peace and the extension of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER:** *You are invited to pray in your own heart language*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and for ever and ever. Amen.**

**FAMILY TIME:** History is very important

*(There will be an offering taken during the following song, and after the song the children will leave us for their own groups)*

**HYMN BP&W 392:**

*Thank you Jesus, thank You, Jesus,  
Thank You, Lord, for loving me.  
Thank You, Jesus, thank You, Jesus,  
Thank You, Lord, for loving me.*

You went to Calvary,  
And there You died for me,  
Thank You, Lord, for loving me.  
You went to Calvary,  
And there You died for me,

You rose up from the grave,  
To me new life You gave,  
Thank You, Lord, for loving me.  
You rose up from the grave,  
To me new life You gave,  
Thank You, Lord, for loving me.

ALISON HUNTLEY © 1978 KINGSWAY THANKYOU MUSIC.

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

#### **ACT OF REMEMBRANCE:**

Let us remember in silence before God, all those who have laid down their lives for our peace and prosperity and for those who are suffering still.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.  
They that now go away weeping,  
and bearing forth good seed, shall come again with joy.  
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
we will remember them.

**We will remember them.**

### **THE LAST POST**

#### **TWO MINUTE SILENCE**

#### **THE KOHIMA EPITAPH:**

"They gave their tomorrow so we could have our today."

#### **A REMEMBRANCE DAY PRAYER:**

The love of God **holds this world together.**  
The power of God **enables the transformation of the world.**  
The justice of God **calls the world to righteousness.**  
The touch of God **caresses the world in its brokenness.**  
The peace of God **brings hope to the world.**  
The voice of God **whispers into each human heart...**

Eternal God, in whose perfect realm no sword is drawn but the sword of justice, and no strength known but the power of love: guide and inspire all who seek your kingdom and work for peace, that peoples and nations may find their security in the love which casts out fear; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

**Amen.**

## **HYMN:**

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere.  
We long for heaven's demonstration here.  
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see.  
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Before all things, in him were all things made.  
Inspiring culture, media, and trade.  
May all our work serve your economy.  
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere.  
With us be present in our public square.  
Fill all who lead with your integrity.  
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Forgive us Lord when we have not engaged.  
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page.  
Make us again what we were made to be.  
Transform, revive, and heal society.

Faithful to govern ever may we be.  
Selfless in service, loving constantly.  
In everything may your authority.  
Transform, revive, and heal society.

MELODY: EVENTIDE (ABIDE WITH ME) BY WILLIAM HENRY MONK (1823-89).

LYRICS: NOEL ROBINSON, ANDY FLANNAGAN, GRAHAM HUNTER © 2016 DOWNWARDLY MOBILE MUSIC, NU IMAGE MUSIC, GRAHAM HUNTER



**GOSPEL READING:** Mark 12:28-34

**NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE READING:** 1 John 3:16-20

## **SERMON: LOVE AND THE KINGDOM (Mark 12:28-34)**

Remembrance Sunday in the UK is held on the second Sunday in November to commemorate those who have died in wars and other military conflicts since the onset of WW1. Traditionally a two-minute period of silence is observed throughout the country at 11 a.m. and church services and other ceremonial gatherings take place during the day. A nationally televised remembrance service, generally attended by politicians, religious leaders, military personnel, and members of the British royal family, has been held for decades at the Cenotaph monument in central London. The most recognisable symbol of Remembrance Sunday is the red poppy, which became associated with World War I memorials after scores of the flowers bloomed in the former battlefields of Belgium and northern France. My own father (born in 1899) left home aged 14 years, and along with scores of others, enlisted in the army, and fought throughout WW1.

There are many reasons why nations go to war... not always just reasons. Supposedly the UK went to war in 1914 because Germany invaded the small defenceless country of Belgium (and we saw France as Germany's next target) but there were other less justifiable reasons. WW2 is more easily understandable where the war was primarily against Nazi fascism (rather than Germany itself). My father would say (in hindsight) that youthful ignorance led him to enlist in

1914 ,but love for his fellow humans, freedom and democracy, led him to oppose Hitler in 1939. Love for others, coupled with a willingness to lay down one's life for others, has always been at the heart of Remembrance Day. Central to the Act of Remembrance are the words of Jesus, 'Greater love has no-one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:13). This kind of selfless love was not simply the motivation for many who went to war against Hitler and his kind, but that which took Jesus himself to Cross for people like us, and remains the motivation that should drive our church, discipleship, ministry and mission. Which brings us to our theme for today:

On Sunday mornings we are looking at the **Kingdom of God** in the teaching of Jesus as recorded by Mark. Thus far we have seen that the Kingdom of God is the central in Jesus' teaching. God has always been sovereign but with the coming of Jesus God's Kingdom/rule in this world has come in a new way. In Jesus we are called to turn, trust and follow Jesus (Mark 1:14-20). There are many sides to this and here (Mark 12:28-34), where Jesus speaks about **Love and the Kingdom**, we see that we are called to love others in the same way God loves us!

Following his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem Jesus leaves the city in order to rest and pray (Mark 11:1-11). Mark picks up the 'Jesus in Jerusalem Narrative' again in v.27 with Jesus back in the city surrounded by a motley collection of hostile chief priests, teachers of the Jewish law and Jewish elders who question his authority to say what he has been saying (Mark 11:27-33). Jesus' response is to tell a Parable against them – the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12:1-12) – so pointed they would have arrested him then and there but were too afraid of the crowd. Later that same day some other religious bigots try and catch Jesus out with trick questions in the hope he will fall into the trap and provide them with grounds for his arrest (Mark 12:12-27). Yet again Jesus proves to be more than a match for them coming up with 'good answers' they cannot refute (Mark 12:28). And here come a twist in the narrative:

Mark tells us that all this is witnessed by another 'teacher of the law' (v.28). He too has a question for Jesus but he is not like the other hostile teachers! His question is neither negative nor novel but one which constantly troubled seekers wondering how we can best serve God: 'Of all the commandments which is the most important?' (v.29). Jesus responds to this request for one commandment by giving two commandments... though both are dominated by the one requirement to love: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength [and] Love your neighbour as yourself' (v.30,31)! Jesus affirms that 'love' is at heart kingdom living, but what does Jesus mean by 'love'? In English we only have the one word but in Greek (the language of the New Testament) there are four words. The highest form of these (and the Greek word used here) is *agape* which is indicative of self-sacrificial love. A love that gives and gives and gives without requiring anything in return. Fascinatingly it is suggested that *agape* was dormant in Greek until it was used to describe God's love?! *Agape* love has been described as 'Calvary Love'. This is the kind of love with which we are to love God and love others!

## **[1] LOVING GOD**

Jesus tells us that in order to be a true citizen of the Kingdom of God we must love the Lord our God with our whole being: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength [v.29]! John tells us we are enabled to love God in this way 'because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19 NKJV). The implication is that when we turn to God in Christ the fruit of having God's own *agape* love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) is the potential to love God in the same whole-hearted way he loves us. The question is not so much how to find such *agape* love but how to release the potential within. Fortunately Jesus spells it out for us: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (v.29)! Essentially Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 but Jesus clearly investing new meaning.

**With All Our Heart.** 'Heart' (Greek: *kardia*) in this context does not mean our physical hearts but rather the centre of affections! Our tendency is to associate the word 'love' with romantic fickleness than true heart love! Our love for God is not to be like that, We must be whole-hearted. We must love God 'with sincerity of heart' [Colossians 3:22].

**With All Our Soul.** 'Soul' (Greek: *psyche*) means the human will. That part of us that determines what we do at any given moment. I would suggest that our inherent human wilfulness is that part of us that is hardest to conquer more than any other. Jesus had to conquer his own human will. In Gethsemane he prayed to God 'not my will but yours be done' (Luke 22:42). If Jesus had to pray such a prayer how much more so do we? Doing God's will should not be done reluctantly, begrudgingly or with a martyr-spirit but from the heart (Ephesians 6:6).

**With All Our Mind.** 'Mind' (Greek: *dianoia*) signifies the ability to know about or understand something, because we have really thought it through. Interestingly this is an aspect of loving God that Jesus adds to his familiar quotation from Deuteronomy 6:5. Why does he do so? We not only need to give our hearts to the Lord, we need to give him our minds as well. Failure to appreciate that our minds are as affected by our fallen nature as much as rest of us will always lead us astray. This is why Paul tells us we need be 'transformed through the renewal of our minds' (Romans 12:2).

**With All Our Strength.** 'Strength' (Greek: *ischus*) fascinatingly signifies not so much 'muscle-power' as ability. In other words Jesus is saying another facet of loving God is to use all our abilities for the Lord. We all have God-given gifts, talents and abilities (natural and spiritual). Paul tells us that 'by God's grace we all have different gifts' (Romans 12:6). Must use our talents in the service of God and others, not bury them (Matthew 25:14-30).

## **[2] LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR**

Jesus also tells us here that in order to be true citizens of the Kingdom of God we must also love our neighbours: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (v.30). We cannot just love God... and ignore (or even hate) our neighbour. 'Love' here is the same kind of *agape* love we have already talked about. We are to love others with that same kind of sacrificial love that God loves us with, the same kind of love we love ourselves with. The key question for us here is not 'What kind of love?' but 'Who is our neighbour?' This is the real point behind Jesus' qualifying comment about 'loving our neighbour as ourselves'. Jesus is quoting Leviticus 19:18 – what he is saying here is not new to his hearers. What is new is the broad interpretation Jesus gives to the word 'neighbour' here. Up until this point the Jews understood 'neighbour' as meaning a fellow Jew? Jesus interprets 'neighbour' as meaning the whole of humankind! Luke's account of this story [Luke 10:25-29] has the lawyer asking for a definition of 'neighbour' which leads to Jesus telling the story of the Good Samaritan. So who is our neighbour? Look around you? Wherever you go? Whoever you meet? That is your neighbour.

**Our Fellow Christians.** John tells us, 'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If we have material possessions and see our brother or sister in need but don't have pity on them, how can the love God be in us. Don't just love with words but with actions and truth' (1 John 3:16-18).

**The Man or Woman in the Street.** The Bible tells us 'God so loved the [whole] world (John 3:16). Jesus had compassion for everyone in Jerusalem [Luke 19:41]. We must never pass by on other side [Luke 10:30-37].

**Even Our Enemies.** Jesus tells us bluntly 'love your enemies' (Matthew 5:43-48). This is how God loved us (Romans 5:8,10, and this is how we are to love everyone else, even those most antagonistic towards us.

When we love God and others like this... we are not far from the Kingdom of God (v.34)!

**HYMN BP&W 634:**

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
Where there is darkness, only light;  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
In giving to all men that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

SEBASTIAN TEMPLE (B. 1928) BASED ON THE PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS.

## COMMUNION

### WORDS OF INVITATION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, it is right that we call to mind the meaning of this Supper. It is a remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world; an encounter with the risen Lord; a feeding on him in faith; a communion with one another in his body, the Church; and looking forward to the day when he will come again. Therefore, we need to come in faith, conscious of our weakness, renouncing our sin, humbly putting our trust in Christ, and seeking his grace.

'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us' (1 John 3:16a).

### A PRAYER OF CONFESSION & THANKSGIVING

#### THE INSTITUTION:

'The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread  
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

This is the body of Christ, broken for you.

*(take a piece of bread and eat as it is served to you)*

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

*(we drink together once all have been served)*

**POST COMMUNION PRAYER:**

**Loving God, we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son and our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer to you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice  
and we commit ourselves to your service.  
Empower us by your Spirit that we may live your resurrection life  
and share your truth and love with all creation. Amen.**

**PRAYERS FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: – Maureen Dickens**

Abba Father, we come to you on this day we call Remembrance Sunday, particularly remembering those who gave their lives in two world wars, but also remembering those who are fighting for freedom today, Ukraine, the countries in the Middle East and we know of other countries around the world. For these places we pray for peace and reconciliation, that the leaders of all the nations will come together and actively work for peace.

**In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father God, we pray for the governments of the world, for wisdom, and courage to bring an end to poverty and oppression.

Make us all instruments of your peace, where there is hatred bring love,  
where there is injury, bring pardon, where there is doubt, bring faith,  
where there is despair, bring hope, where there is darkness, bring light.  
and where there is sorrow, bring joy.

**In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer, and give us all understanding.**

Jesus, we thank you for all that you have done and are doing in our town, and that our witness will gather momentum in this country and further afield, and your name will be glorified.

**In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father God, we pray for the country of America, that there would be wisdom and peace both within the new government and throughout the land, that tolerance would shine through, and that people would genuinely love their neighbour.

**In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

**HYMN MP 799:**

All I once held dear, built my life upon,  
All this world reveres, and wars to own,  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss;  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing You, Jesus,  
Knowing You, there is no greater thing.  
You're my all, You're the best,  
You're my joy, my righteousness,  
And I love You, Lord.*

Now my heart's desire is to know You more,  
To be found in You and known as Yours.  
To possess by faith what I could not earn,  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness.

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life,  
And to know You in Your sufferings.  
To become like You in Your death, my Lord,  
So with You to live and never die.

GRAHAM KENDRICK © 1993 MAKE WAY MUSIC.

**A REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY BLESSING:**

Go in the Spirit of Christ, the Prince of peace, to honour the dead, to serve the living and to build the common good.

Go in peace and work for peace.

And may the peace and blessing of God fill your lives, your hearts and your homes, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**THE GRACE:**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.**



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**TODAY and dates for your diary:**

**Church Meetings:**

- There will be a short mini Church Meeting after the service today.
- There is a full Church Meeting after the service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November.
- There will be an extra Church Meeting after the service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**The Leadership Course continues with Session 2 on:**

- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November – 2.30 pm in person in the Brookside room.
- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November – 7.30 pm on Zoom (ID: 828 1505 7805 Passcode: 41165).

**Church Prayer Meeting:**

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November - In person in the Upper Room Prayer Room at church 10.30 – 11.30 am.
- Every Tuesday evening 8- 8.30 pm Zoom – see church WhatsApp group for link or Meeting ID: 862 1518 8882 Passcode: 657161

**Baptismal Service:** the next one is on 17<sup>th</sup> November. If you would like to be baptised and/or become a Church Member please speak to the Minister or one of the Deacons.

**Worship and Prayer Event:** on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Globe starting at 7.00 pm. This is a Transform Reading Celebration with the theme, 'To us Child is Born,' as a lead up to the Christmas season.

If you would like to contribute financially to Abbey International Baptist Church electronically, please use the card reader at the back of the church or scan the following QR code below to pay:

**QR Code for Offering:**