

**“From One Generation to the Next”**

Meditation Preached by The Rev. Jennifer Cameron

November 8, 2020 – St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Belleville

**Hymns for Worship Video – November 8, 2020**

“O God Our Help in Ages Past” #330 in the Book of Praise vs. 1, 3, 5.

O God our help in ages past  
Our hope for years to come  
Our shelter from the stormy blast  
And our eternal home

Before the hills in order stood  
Or earth received her frame  
From everlasting Thou art God  
To endless years the same

Time like an ever rolling stream  
Bears all our years away  
They fly forgotten as a dream  
Dies at the op'ning day

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“Blessed Assurance” #687 in the Book of Praise

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine  
O what a foretaste of glory divine  
Heir of salvation purchase of God  
Born of His Spirit washed in His blood

*Chorus*

This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Saviour all the day long  
This is my story this is my song  
Praising my Saviour all the day long

Perfect submission perfect delight  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy whispers of love

*Chorus*

Perfect submission all is at rest  
I in my Saviour am happy and blest  
Watching and waiting looking above  
Filled with His goodness lost in His love

*Chorus*

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“I’m Gonna Live so God can Use Me” #648 in the Book of Praise vs. 1, 3, 4

I’m gonna live so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime  
I’m gonna live so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime

I’m gonna pray so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime  
I’m gonna pray so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime

I’m gonna sing so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime  
I’m gonna sing so God can use me  
Anywhere, Lord, anytime

*Words & Music: African-American spiritual*

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**Scripture Texts: Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25**

Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. <sup>3</sup> But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.

<sup>14</sup> “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. <sup>15</sup> But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

<sup>16</sup> Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! <sup>17</sup> It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. <sup>18</sup> And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God.”

<sup>19</sup> Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”

<sup>21</sup> But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the Lord.”

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord.”

“Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied.

<sup>23</sup> “Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.”

<sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.”

<sup>25</sup> On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of humankind, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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### **Remembrance Observance**

Today we acknowledge Remembrance Sunday as our nation anticipates Remembrance Day in the coming week. I always find this to be a difficult service to plan and implement as there is so much emotion that goes into our Remembrance observance. Let me take a moment to lead us through the ritual of remembering. I encourage you to participate in virtual Remembrance Day ceremonies on November 11<sup>th</sup> so you can experience the full ritual in which we usually participate together. Wherever you are watching today, I invite you to stand as we show our respect to those courageous, dedicated men and women of the Armed Forces, past and present.

\*We remember the personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces as we honour their roles in wars throughout history. The following list of conflicts in which Canada has provided troops is from the Veterans Affairs Canada website ([veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca)).

- South African War 1899-1902
- First World War 1914-1918
- Second World War 1939-1945
- Korean War 1950-1953
- Gulf War 1990-1991
- Rwanda 1993-1996
- Afghanistan 2001-2014

Every day Canadian Armed Forces members put their lives at risk, often leaving their families and homes behind to courageously defend our country's values and contribute to international peace and security.

They have played many important roles both at home and around the world in the years since the Korean War. Whether protecting our frontiers, working with our allies, providing humanitarian assistance, helping restore peace in troubled countries or fighting those who would deny freedom to others, the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces have stood tall (veterans.gc.ca).

Since 1954 these courageous people have served or are serving in:

Afghanistan

Balkans

Cambodia

Congo

Cyprus

East Timor

Egypt

Ethiopia & Eritrea

Gulf War

Haiti

Mali

NATO

Rwanda

Somalia

Syria

Many have lost their lives in service to their country. As they have fought, provided protection, fostered peace, cared for the wounded, and many other roles they have fulfilled, they have done and do so with our respect, and as admirable representatives of the land we call home.

*Act of Remembrance*

L: Let us remember before God, and commend to His sure keeping, those who have died for their country in war, in peacekeeping, and all who have lived and died in the service of humankind. They shall not grow 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!

P: We will remember them!

*Last Post*

*Minute of Silence*

*Rouse*

*A Prayer for the Armed Forces (from the United Church in Canada: united-church.ca)*

O God of hosts, God who calls us to be engaged in the world; we pray for those who are serving in our Armed Forces; Army, Navy, Air Force, and those who provide support for them. We pray for clerks and gunners, navigators and parachute packers, infanteers and public affairs officers. We pray for those who care for those who fight: for mental health nurses, doctors, and chaplains. We pray for those who put themselves in harm's way; for Search and Rescue Technicians, for those engaged in mine-clearing, for those in the air or on the seas. Keep them safe in their tasks; keep them virtuous in their calling; preserve them from danger, and return them to those who love them. May they know our gratitude for their commitment and courage, and for their dedication to freedom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you for joining me in this Remembrance Observance today. You may be seated.

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### **Meditation**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

At this time of the year, we remember, we give thanks, and we honour those who have served and given their lives in so many armed conflicts throughout history. Our Canadian military strives to bring and keep peace in areas of strife. They serve to protect our freedom, secure the freedom of others, and provide aid and relief where there is disaster and devastation. Too many have died in their efforts to bring an end to conflict, or to protect the innocents whose lives are destroyed by war. Our hearts are heavy as we acknowledge Remembrance Day, for we know how deep the sacrifice and heartbreak has been for so many families. We cannot know their grief unless we have experienced this type of loss. We cannot stand in their shoes. But we can stand together to honour the fallen, to express our gratitude to those who have retired from active military service, and support those who continue to serve. Young adults from our own congregation are currently serving in the Army and Navy. People have children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews in active service, or retired. We have neighbours and friends that serve or have served in the military. We give thanks to God for the Canadian Forces, and ask the Lord to protect them, no matter where they are currently stationed.

From one generation to the next, we are thankful for those who fought for and protect our freedom. As we read the passage from Joshua today, we are reminded of the importance of remembering those who have gone before us, who have known God's blessings, and have passed them to us.

Those who have gone before us have shaped who we are today. Our ancestors in life and faith have passed the worship and service of the church from one generation to the next. Just as it is important, to learn from their wisdom, we also learn from their missteps.

God promised Abraham as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. Generation after generation lived in that promise, until the time of Jesus when the law was fulfilled, and the generations began passing on faith in what God has done to save and protect us through Christ. From the beginning, God has been faithful to his people without wavering.

From the beginning, God's people have made mistakes. Generation after generation has tried to take matters into their own hands when they were tired of waiting for God to act, and generation after generation has known the consequences. Generation after generation has needed God's forgiveness. In today's reading, Joshua reminds Israel of the mistakes their ancestors made in worshipping pagan deities, and warns the people to break the habit. He tells them to make their choice between the One True God and other false gods, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord," he says. The people declare their intention to also serve the Lord God, and Joshua gives them a stern warning about what will happen if they again turn from Yahweh. They must serve the One True God and him alone. The people insist they will follow and obey. So Joshua renewed the law and the covenant between God and his people, and the generations continued. It didn't always go well. Mistakes happened. So did redemption.

In Thessalonians we see the apostle assuring his readers that those who have died before the coming of God's kingdom will indeed be raised to new life for they died with hope that the day of the Lord would come and Christ's reign would finally be established on earth. Those who die having faith in Christ, as the Gospel assures us without any doubt, shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Those ancestors that have lived the faith and passed it on from one generation to the next are among those who will know eternal life because they not only believed the cross and resurrection to be true, but they made sure others believe it too. The church lives today because the Holy Spirit has breathed life into it, and because those before us have passed it along to us.

On Remembrance Day, we are heartbreakingly aware of those who have died sacrificially for the sake of others. Those who died having hope in the life promised through Christ will know the fulfillment of that promise. We are grateful to them for what they have done for Canada and the world, and for what they gave to make sure those that came after them would benefit. Those who serve now have had the honour passed to them from those who went before them, and they will continue to translate that honour to those who will come next.

From generation to generation the world has known war and peace, conflict and resolution. It always has, and always will. Thank goodness each generation has also had the opportunity to experience and endure these things with hope in Christ's final freedom. May we always remember the hope we hold onto because the faith has come to us from the generations before us, the hope we must share with the next.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
 Between the crosses, row on row,  
 That mark our place; and in the sky  
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
 We are the Dead. Short days ago  
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
 Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
 In Flanders Fields.  
 Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.  
*Major John McCrae (later Lieutenant-Colonel)*

Amen. Thanks be to God.