

## **Service Transcript**

### **Remembrance Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November**

*Leader: Janet Rhea*

*Speaker: Mark Reid*

*Come now is the time to worship*

*Battle of Britain Video* is quite challenging. As I watched it the narrator spoke about “famous” people and listed names and I only knew one of them. Later he said whether 5 or 50 years goes past we will not forget the sacrifice. Today we will remember.

The men who fought in the battle of Britain had high mortality rates, and yet they were willing to go and make the sacrifice. It is a challenge to us today when we are being asked to sacrifice some freedom for the welfare of all. In what do we trust. What is the most

*All I once held dear*

1 Reflection on sacrifice: Jesus calls us to imitate Him and take up our cross. It’s a phrase that has been mis-used over and over again through the ages. Taking up the cross is not dealing with noisy neighbours or difficult in-laws.

It would be easy as we remember those who have fought for freedom and seen others losing their lives, to become bitter and vengeful. But taking up the cross means laying down and forsaking the way of the world, which is vengeance, retribution, judgment, offence, unforgiveness, power and control. Taking up the cross is the way of co-suffering love. It is the way of forgiveness, of turning the other cheek, of forsaking the right to revenge. It is laying down the right to make our own way, instead choosing His way, even if it means being misunderstood, persecuted or maligned.

This is why the cross is our symbol. We die with Christ and are raised to newness of life in Him. We die to sin and rise to freedom in Jesus. We die to self and learn the justice of obedience. Today as we remember those who laid down their lives, we also remember the way of the cross. The way of grace.

Lord as we come to reflect on those who have lost their lives due to war, help us to die to ourselves and learn obedience to your command to forgive, and enable us to receive and share your grace through our lives so that others may see that the real hope for peace is only found in you. Amen.

*Jesus hope of the nations*

The most solemn part of the annual remembrance service, is this time when we honour the lives of those killed in the two world wars and other conflicts. I was watching the film *1917* recently which is the story of Director Sam Mendes’ grandfather who fought in the First World War and had the dangerous job of passing through no-man’s land to reach a regiment who were going to go into a futile offensive where tens of thousands would be

killed. He carried orders from the General to halt the offensive and save lives. He made it just in time. It's one of those First World War films that reflect the scale of awfulness, the privations, the dangers and death at the Front.

Many of the men on the church's memorial were some of the 886,000 who died in service in that war. We remember the men from MRBC and all others from this town who gave their lives for their country as well as the millions of others who also died in the various conflicts.

Let's all stand as we come to the act of remembrance

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 is sounded.  
The Two Minute Silence is observed.  
Reveille is sounded.

*When you go home, tell them of us and say,  
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.*

*Abide with me*

### **Sermon**

This year was the 80<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Battle of Britain (on 15<sup>th</sup> September) and we watched the little video on The Few earlier. As battles in either World War were concerned, it had neither the scale or the losses of the Somme, Ypres, Dunkirk or D-Day. The number of combatants was low by comparison, but we all know that the victory the RAF achieved in 1940 averted the death and destruction an invasion of Britain would have entailed. It was one of those defining moments in British history, and of the War. Churchill was quite right in stating "*never in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few.*" Being a pilot was very dangerous: *the average life expectancy of a spitfire pilot during the Battle of Britain was an astonishing four weeks.* Generally, aircrew in the Second World War suffered high losses.

However, for The Few to succeed they also needed a whole host of support crew on the ground: mechanics, armourers, ground defences, as well as all the support people like the NAAFI, stores and so on. What really gave the RAF an edge were all the boffins and engineers that operated the radar, the ground observers who spotted incoming planes, the communications engineers who kept the phones going and then all the people at the Operations Centre. It was a huge endeavour involving many people.

That was true of all parts of the armed forces during both world wars. Victory was achieved because people worked together to achieve victory. In the video was a quote by Clement Atlee in 1946: "*Freedom survives because we gave everything with the one aim of victory.*"

The price of freedom was paid with blood. Because both world wars are now outside the experience of most people now alive, it's important to remember that war affected the very heart of communities.

Someone had very helpfully put these notices on lamp posts in each street to show the price paid in blood for our freedom in that street. There are some familiar Felixstowe family names on the notices.

I was challenged by what Janet said about how many of the Few we could name. How many people involved in either world war can we name, other than the big names or members of our own families? Yet, look at these names and they are someone's son, someone's husband. We honour them this morning as all these gave their lives in the service of this country.

Yet there was an even bigger victory that was achieved by one man who stood alone, without any support services, without a huge army behind Him and it all came through Him paying the ultimate sacrifice. He gave everything for victory, even His own life. We read these verses earlier.

*Colossians 2* <sup>13</sup> *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,* <sup>14</sup> *having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.* <sup>15</sup> *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (NIV)*

Of course, that victory was the rescue of the human race by one man, Jesus, by His death on the cross. His death and subsequent resurrection meant that He had victory over death and victory over the spiritual authorities and powers. It's through Jesus that God is able to forgive all who would come to Him.

One feature common to almost all Commonwealth War Cemeteries is a cross. It's usually both a centrepiece to the cemetery and on the headstone of each of the fallen, unless they were known to be of another religion. The cross is often associated with death – indeed the cross was a tool of execution to the Romans.

But for those of us who have come to know Christ by accepting the forgiveness that God offers us through Him and by trusting and following Him, the Cross is the symbol of victory, of resurrection. It is a symbol of hope.

In the dark days of 1940, the actions of The Few brought hope to a nation that found itself standing alone against an enemy that had swept away everything before it.

We live in strange times don't we? There is so much uncertainty, lives lost and society torn apart by the pandemic, the uncertainty of Brexit, uncertainty about climate change. Yet, one man, Jesus, brings hope in the face of all of these, hope for now and hope for the future.

Let's pray:

Father,

We thank you for the courage and sacrifice of those who served their country and brought us through troublous times. As we again honour lives lost in world wars and other conflicts, we remember in quiet gratitude that for our tomorrow, they gave their today. By their sacrifice they brought hope for our nation.

We thank You that in Jesus, you have brought, at the cost of His life, hope for all those who put their personal faith and trust in Him. May we be a people who reflect His hope and courage and desire to serve others day by day.

We ask this in His name

Amen

*This is amazing grace*

Benediction