



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

8 November 2020

**by
Gillian Bounds**

Some words from Psalm 115 verse 12 to reflect on:

“The Lord remembers us and will bless us:”

On this Remembrance Sunday, when we are beginning a second lockdown and the world is in turmoil for so many reasons, read the words of hymn number 706 in StF focussing particularly on Bernadette Farrell’s words in the second verse. Music [here](#)

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

*Shine through the
darkness.*

Christ, be our light!

Those words express many of our concerns and lead us into our prayers:

Great and loving God, on this day of remembrance we come to you asking you to be with us during our quiet time. As we remember past events and reflect on the world’s current situation, calm our hearts, still our fears and help us focus on you. May we know your presence with us and in the stillness hear you speaking to us. Remind us that although we may feel overwhelmed at times, you are with us walking alongside us, helping and sustaining us. Forgive us that so often and so easily we forget all that you do for us. We fail to remember your sovereign transforming power, to remember you in the good times as well as the bad, to count our many blessings, to recognise your hand at work in every moment of our lives. Almighty God, through all things you remember us – forgive us and help us to always remember you. Amen.

Say the words of the Lord’s Prayer quietly.

Reading: Psalm 115:9-13

All you Israelites, trust in the Lord—

he is their help and shield.

¹⁰ House of Aaron, trust in the Lord—

he is their help and shield.
¹¹ You who fear him, trust in the Lord—
he is their help and shield.
¹² The Lord remembers us and will bless us:
He will bless his people Israel,
he will bless the house of Aaron,
¹³ he will bless those who fear the Lord—
small and great alike.

November is a month for remembering. We have had the Circuit Memorial service on YouTube remembering those we have loved and lost, then there was November 5th when we remember something of our country's political history. Today we have come to Remembrance Sunday and on Wednesday it is Armistice Day. So much for us to remember and reflect upon. For his 80th birthday we gave my Father a simple word processor and a ream of A4 paper. Our elder son had been writing his memoirs at primary school and decided he would like his Grandad to do the same. There was a list of headings to guide him, his schooldays, hobbies, cars and war experiences amongst many. So there in the memoirs is a section on the D Day landings which concludes with the words "That night, the night of the 6th June, 1944 I was back in Southampton Water after a day I will never forget, and that it seems the world will never forget." Those words are particularly poignant to me as five years after writing them my Father suffered a stroke resulting in severe dementia. He forgot so much and, as on many occasions, did not even know me, it was natural to conclude he had also forgotten that chapter of his life. Imagine then, my surprise when on the 70th anniversary of the landings while watching the television coverage he struggled to stand, salute and introduce himself as Chief Petty Officer. His words from the memoirs rang true, such was the horror and trauma of the day it truly was a day he would never forget.

Memory is a very precious thing and sadly memory loss is becoming more prevalent as we live longer. Having spent many hours in care homes and

witnessed people forgetting the very basics of life, not only who other people are or what they have been doing, but even more seriously how to eat, stand or talk, I know how essential memory really is for us to function.

The word “remember” occurs well over two hundred times in the Bible and a good many of those times are when God’s people are being urged to remember His covenant with them and all that He had done for them. God knew how easy it was for the people to forget and how they needed to be reminded. In the New Testament Jesus also reminds the disciples of what He has said to them or what has happened when they have been together. Then Paul takes on the role in the Epistles when he urges people to remember. Still today when we are able to share in Holy Communion, we are reminded that the sacrament is done in memory of Jesus.

Many of those references to “remember” are when we are told of specific people God remembered, “God remembered Noah” Genesis 8:1, “He remembered Abraham” Genesis 19:29, “Then God remembered Rachel” Genesis 30:22 and there are many more. Not only did God remember them but He remembered their actions too as in the case of Cornelius, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and **remembered** your gifts to the poor.” Acts 10:31.

Today we acknowledge how important memory is as we reflect on and remember all those who have given of themselves in service to the country. We also think of those who struggle to hold things in their own memories as age and cognitive impairment takes its toll, only then beginning to realise what a precious gift memory is. Finally, we are reassured that although we might constantly need to be reminded by God how He loves and cares for us, He never forgets us. He loves us, cares for us and calls us each by name. He does this whatever our circumstances, whatever our troubles and concerns, even if we can no longer remember Him in the way we once could. Amen.

Take time to read the words of hymn 621 in StF letting Mary Louise Bringle's words speak to you as a prayer. Music [here](#)

When memory fades and recognition falters,
When eyes we love grow dim, and minds confused,
Speak to our souls of love that never alters;
Speak to our hearts by pain and fear abused.
O God of life and healing peace,
Empower us with patient courage, by your grace infused.

Let us pray:

In the quietness we think of all who are ill and in pain at this time. Those in hospitals, care homes, hospices or their own home. Be close to them we pray. We bring into your presence the lonely and frightened, those facing difficulties in the coming week, the depressed, confused and careworn, those for whom the future is uncertain and those for whom it seems hopeless - may each know the comfort of your presence.

We pray for all who mourn. Those who can see no clear way forward at the moment, blinded by their grief, isolation and sense of loss. Let their tears be healing as you hold them in the circle of your loving arms.

We pray for ourselves as we remember those who bought our peace, may we never take it for granted. Help us to appreciate daily our freedom: our freedom to be, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and our freedom to worship. As we remember those who gave their lives for our freedom may we give of ourselves in the service of others in whatever way you call us. Help us to give unstintingly of ourselves, strengthened and guided by you. Make us bold to share what we have been blessed with financially, materially and spiritually. Focus our eyes on you and remind us constantly of your love for us, a love which took your Son to the cross that we might have life. When we struggle to remember may we still know that despite our doubts and uncertainty that we are loved by you with an eternal love that knows no bounds. Amen.

In StF 470 Timothy Dudley-Smith prompts us to remember how God has taken care of us in the past and how He leads us into the future:

Music [here](#)

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Go from this time knowing you are held secure in the love of God who knows you, remembers you and enfolds you in His everlasting arms. Amen

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