We on this Sunday gather together in Remembrance of those who have given their lives as a sacrifice for us today, to live, gather and worship freely for the collective betterment of everyone so they too can know what it is like to live in a free and just society. This is such powerful imagery, such powerful emotions that it evokes in us as a reader, and as followers of Christ. To know, to feel the power of God, to hear and know that God will never abandon us, in our gloomy, grey days, when we battel and wrestle to get out of bed, to go to work, to battle our inner demons we to often forget that Gods light, Gods love is in us, is around us and is endless. We give into the enemy and turn away from God. We feel separated from the love of Christ, and the light of christ seems to have been blown out and forgotten, But again if God is with us, who can be against us? No one, nothing can. When we feel, when we get entrapped into our personal drama, conflicts, and issues and we give in, that's will separate us from the love of Christ, when hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword are beating us to the ground, all we need to do is look up and open our eyes to the Lord. We need to reach out in these times we feel abandoned and grab Christ's hand.

I invite us to remember the stories, The stories of the war on both the civilian and military sides both a powerful feature of childhoods and up bringings. But some of the most powerful stories are the ones about people supporting and encouraging each other in times of struggle and suffering.

A WOMAN'S STORY The story of a woman whose husband has just left for who knows where for who knows how long: I couldn't bear to see him go. We'd only been married for 18 months. But there he was looking out at me through the greasy glass of the passenger train. Trying to smile. Waving a hand. Holding the carnation I had given him as we spent our last few minutes together on the platform of the train station. We were both trying to be so brave but I couldn't let go of the thought that this might be the last time I ever saw him. And, if that was going to be the way it was, every moment, every sound and smell and texture was going to be cherished and stored away in my heart and mind. Finally, the engine blew its whistle. There was a lurch as the train began its journey. "This is it!" I thought. "This is it! He's really going. Tell me it's not so!" But it was so and as the train picked up speed, we tried to watch one another through the glass until the last possible moment. Then he was gone. I watched as the train powered out of the station. Car after car passed and finally the caboose. I watched it until every last car was out of sight and then I stood there and just started to sob. Then there was a touch on my shoulder. I turned my head to see another woman, one whom I had never seen before. In her eyes were understanding. "I know what you're going through," they seemed to say. Then without saying a word, she came around to face me and she reached out her arms and held me - held me as the tears flowed. Held me as I let go of all my grief and fear and anger. She cried as well and we held each other until we could cry no more. It was so good to know that she was there, that there was someone who knew what I was going through and that I was not alone. I will never forget her act of support and encouragement.

A FLIER'S STORY The story of a man who remembers his first mission over France and Germany in a Lancaster bomber: My stomach felt like the new wringer washer that Mom just bought. What wasn't being sloshed about was being squeezed dry. I was new to the crew, an 18 year old tail gunner - the most dangerous position in a bomber. My predecessor had been wounded during the last mission sitting right where I was sitting. It was a sobering thought. You couldn't see much in the dark. We'd left England ages ago and crossed the black water toward France. I kept hoping we were going in the right direction but if we were lost then the rest of the squadron was lost too. I could see them faintly around me in the dim moonlight. Suddenly the sky behind me let up in an explosion that sent a termor through our aircraft. Then another one went off over to the port side. It was my first taste of anti-aircraft fire and it was a frightening thing. Suddenly, explosions were going off all around like a hundred flash bulbs all at once. One of the bombers behind us was hit, losing a small piece of its wing but it carried on. Another plane was hit. One of its engines caught fire. I felt a morbid fear well up in side of me. What if that happens to us? What if we get hit? There's no knowing who makes it and who doesn't. What if we don't make it? What if...? All I wanted to do was turn around and go home. But I couldn't. Suddenly, none of this made any sense. I guess I was near panic. Then I heard the captain's voice on my headset. "How's it going Duke? If you're a little scared that's okay. The rest of us are a little scared too. But we're here together and we each have our job to do. I know that you can do yours. Just settle down. Sing a song for us, why don't you. We'll be out of this in no time. You'll see." I heard what he had to say and tried to think of a song but the only one I could think of was Jesus Loves Me. So I started singing it: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." When I finished the second verse, I heard a few snickers from the rest of the crew but that was okay. It let me know they were there and listening and caring. The pilot was right. It wasn't long before we were through the ack-ack and on to the target. We got back to England safely on that first mission. Two aircraft from our squadron weren't so lucky. The encouragement that I received from the rest of the crew was such a big help. I will never forget those guys.

A NURSE'S STORY The story of a nurse who served in a field hospital remembering a young soldier who came in with severe wounds: The stretcher bearers brought the unconscious soldier into the field hospital and laid him in the waiting area. Then they were gone again. His right leg was shattered - part of it missing. There was a tourniquet on it. The first aid team had done their job well. I started to clean him up and look for any less obvious injuries. With a wet towel I began to clean some of the mud off of his face and neck. What I discovered was the most beautiful face. It was boyish and without blemish - like the face of an angel. I paused for a moment. As I was looking at him, his eyes flickered and opened. They were a clear, deep blue. At first, he was confused and scared, still in shock. I told him who I was and where he was and that he was going to be okay. He said he was scared and could I stay with him. I looked around. He was the only one waiting for surgery. "Sure," I said. "I'll stay with you as long as you want." Then I took his hand and he squeezed mine tightly. We sat there like that for more than half an hour. He would drift in and out of consciousness and when he woke up, he was always scared. But when he looked up and saw me, he would relax, squeeze my hand and, once again, close his eyes to rest. Finally, it was his turn for surgery. He squeezed my hand one last time and was gone to the O.R. That was the end of his soldiering days. It's tough to march on one leg. He was stabilized and, the next day, shipped further back behind the lines toward England. For the longest time, the image of his angelic face stayed in my mind. I wondered how he made out. Then, one day, I got a letter from him. In that letter, he told me what a comfort I had been to him during those very dark hours. "I still wake up frightened sometimes," he wrote," but when I do, I think of you there beside me, holding my hand, and I feel a lot better. You will never know what an encouragement you were to me. Thank you." The stories of encouragement are some of the most powerful stories of all. Encouragement comes in many forms. Through an embrace, through words, just by being there. People were able to communicate their concern and their care for one another.

In an odd kind of way, I have come to believe that those young Canadians who went to war were working toward a vision of the Kingdom of God. For sure, God's Kingdom is not one of warfare, bloodshed and suffering. It is, however, one of self- sacrifice and one in which persecution and injustice cannot be tolerated. We all know that that Kingdom will not be completed until Christ returns at his Second Coming to finally defeat the forces of evil once and for all. In struggling against the human forces of evil, all of the people who contributed to the war effort sought to offer a glimmer of light to many for whom the world must have seemed a very dark and bitter place. We need to remember them, their struggle and sacrifice. And we need to thank God for the encouragement that they give to us when we wonder where our world is going and sometimes are tempted to lose hope. The torch of justice and freedom must be passed on to each generation. May we hold it high and honour it as legacy to be cherished and continued. Lest we forget. Thanks be to God. Amen.