

In our first reading, from the prophet Haggai, the people of Israel are standing in the ruins of what used to be God's Temple. Years have passed since their return from exile. They've managed to rebuild homes & to plant fields, but the house of the Lord remains a pile of rubble. The people are tired, uncertain, & ashamed.

And in the midst of all this, God speaks through Haggai both a challenge & a promise: *"Take courage, all you people of the land; work, for I am with you... The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former."*

Now, you know how it feels when you hear news that sounds too good to be true — the elders remember the glory of Solomon's Temple, & they can't imagine anything that could ever match it. It's hard to have hope when all you see is dust & ruins. What they don't see yet is that the new temple will not be defined by gold plating & cedar beams but by nothing less than God's living presence among the people.

The work of hope takes a trusting imagination, & it's at the heart of the second reading as well as the gospel. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle writes to believers who are anxious & confused. Someone has been spreading the rumour that *"the day of the*

Lord” had already come — that they’ve somehow missed it. Fear spreads among the people, but Paul steadies them with this word of encouragement: “Do not be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed... stand firm and hold fast to the traditions you were taught.”

And in our gospel today from Luke, the Sadducees come to Jesus with their clever riddle about resurrection. They’ve come to trip Jesus up, not to seek truth, & they mock the idea that God could bring life out of death. So Jesus answers them simply: *“He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.”*

In each of these readings, God’s people are battling uncertainty, loss, & fear. They’re asking whether the promises of God still hold true when things look nothing like they should. Which brings them to where we are today.

On this Remembrance Sunday, we pause in silence, remembering those whose names are carved in stone or brass — sons, daughters, friends — lives offered up in the hope of peace. We remember the veterans who came home, forever changed by the experience. We remember past wars, & we remember the wars raging

today. And we see the same heartbreaks happening all over:

- cities bombed to rubble;
- children starving, injured, dead, or displaced;
- hatred & fear rising like beasts from the sea.

And it's easy to feel like the people in Haggai's time, looking at the ruins, wondering how the future could ever be better than the past.

And it's easy to feel like the Thessalonians, confused & shaken by all the misinformation, the political & religious divisions.

And it's easy to be scared by leaders of the world shouting, "my way or the highway."

And in such a world, peace feels like a pipe dream.

But into this world, Jesus spoke words that still challenge & comfort us today: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

And just who are these children of God — these peace-makers?

They put in the labour of loving others in the midst of conflict. They facilitate & direct the work of truth & reconciliation. They do the work of keeping hope, & of encouraging others. As we know the tree by its fruit, *they are the ones who do the holy work of God.*

You see, even among the unholy noise of wars raging, we can still hear God's gentle voice all grace & peace, speaking as it did through Haggai:

"My Spirit abides among you; do not fear."

And so, in the encouragement of the apostle Paul:

"God chose you ... stand firm and hold fast."

And in Jesus' words to the cynics: death cannot destroy our relationship with the living God.

All of these readings remind us that *God is faithful*.

That, when our hearts trip up, God's Spirit abides.

That, when peace collapses, God never stops bringing life out of death.

God is faithful. That is the promise that kept soldiers from sinking into foxholes. That is the promise that anchors us when everything else seems to be falling apart: the God who made us is still at work redeeming us, still redeeming this world.

So what does that mean for us today, gathered in the quiet of Remembrance Sunday?

It means that, in remembering the fallen, we do so not only with tears but with hope. Because Jesus has told us that *our God is the God of the living*. Those who laid

down their lives in the pursuit of peace are not forgotten in God's sight — they are held, eternally, in God's loving embrace.

It means that when we see brokenness in the world, we don't turn away. We take on the work of the peacemaker: choosing dialogue over vengeance, mercy over fear, compassion over cynicism.

To be a peacemaker is not to be naïve; it means giving evil the death stare — staying brave enough to believe that God's Spirit still abides among us: healing, rebuilding, & calling us to join in.

It means that when we grow weary of rebuilding — whether that's rebuilding a world, a church, or a life — we remember Haggai's promise: *“The latter splendour shall be greater than the former.”*

God's future is not a diminished echo of the past, like Bryan Adams' “Summer of '69” on repeat. The future God promises is *new glory, the fruit of grace*.

So when you find yourself shaken by the world's noise, remember Paul's words: *“Stand firm and hold fast.”* Hold fast to the gospel of love, & to the hope that outlasts death.

That's what it means to do what our collect for today asks: to *inwardly digest* Scripture is to let God's story become our story — to let resurrection hope shape how we see everything, even loss & war. *Lest we forget...*

Because the hope of everlasting life doesn't just mean going on to our heavenly home on high. It means that *true* life — God's life — is already breaking through, into our world here & now, seen in every act of mercy, every offering of peace, every moment that love triumphs over hate.

And so, today, as we remember the veterans & all those who gave their lives for peace, we pray for the courage to live as those same children of light whom Jesus calls “blessed.”

And as we remember the sacrifices of others, we also recommit ourselves:

to be peacemakers,
to be rebuilders,
to be people of hope.

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