

8th November 2020

**Theme: “God our help and our hope”
Remembrance Sunday**

Opening Prayer

Faithful, gracious Father,
we welcome your presence among us
We are amazed that you continue to concern
yourself with us, despite our deep and
constant unworthiness of you.

We offer You our worship today with reverent,
humble, thankful hearts; in the name of Jesus
Christ, our Lord and Saviour,
AMEN.

StF 132: O God our help in ages past

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjdmLstpNGE> (trad)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuT6a5HRLo0>

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

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

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 its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

Please read from your Bible:

John 16: 25 – 33; Isaiah 2: 1 - 5

Reflection on Today’s Scripture

Every year we sing: “O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, Be Thou Our guard while life shall last and our eternal home.” It’s a powerful and important hymn in our Remembrance, but what does it mean?

“O God our help in ages past ...” Throughout the ages God has helped and rescued his

people, when they would let him. Today we can think of God’s help in remarkable ways: the remarkable evacuation of Dunkirk is but one example, and perhaps too that the Nazi regime despite its apparent strength, was overcome and we enjoy a freedom we would not have had without God’s help and the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the cause of justice, freedom and peace.

We could also reflect on the amazing changes that swept through South Africa in the early 90s, in a powerful and peaceful way when many expected a bloody and bitter battle. In that moment even the non-believing journalist remarked that it must have been answer to prayers and that ‘*what happened could not be accounted for in terms of rational analysis*’. No one can count the amount of prayer by millions that went into such things releasing God’s help to us.

When we begin to look, we can see the evidence of God’s help in the past.

We also sing, “Our hope for years to come” It has been said that religion and politics should not mix. Sometimes religion seems to be the cause of the problem but the words of the prophet Isaiah that we read a few moments ago remind us that God wants no part of such things. God wants no part except to judge the nations and settle disputes, to teach us His ways. God’s purposes for the world include the political. Those who seek peace for the world seek for the same as God, but we cannot make it happen without him. The prophet speaks of the nations coming together under God’s rule. God is “Our hope for years to come ...”

“And our eternal home ...”

This prophecy is talking about the time when Christ will return to finally complete the establishing of his kingdom that he has gradually been building throughout history. Only then, with the return of the Prince of Peace, will we finally see a ceasing of war among the nations. This will be final and those who have trusted in him will be raised to a new and perfect life where God will have

removed all crying, sadness, pain, and even death, to live in the love of God forever.

Today as much as ever the world is searching for peace. Sometimes in rather war-like ways – maybe this reflects a desperation for peace. Here is a great vision for Christian and non-Christian alike to aspire to, that we would no longer train for war, the beating of swords (and guns and missiles) into plough shares .. a refocusing of effort into a feeding of all the nations, including those who, in this modern age of civilisation and technology, still starve.

This is the message we have to share and it is a message of hope. We must share it in what we say and what we do. The world is hungry for peace and Jesus is the only one who can bring peace as others receive and respond to him, does the peace of Christ increase peace for the world.

May God truly be “Our hope for years to come, and our eternal home.”

The Act of Remembrance (*stand if you wish*)

Let us remember before God,
and commend to his sure keeping:
those who have died for their country in war
those whom we knew,
and whose memory we treasure;
and all who have lived and died
in the service of humankind.

Remember by name any you have known:

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 shall remember them.

Silence

A time of Intercessory prayers

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of
conflict, and ask that God may give us peace:
for the service men and women who have
died or been injured in the violence of war,
each one remembered by and known to God;
for those who love them in death as in life,
offering the distress of our grief
and the sadness of our loss;

for civilian women, children and men
whose lives are disfigured by war or terror,
calling to mind in penitence the anger and
hatreds of humanity,
for peace-makers and peace-keepers,
who seek to keep this world secure and free;
for all who bear the burden and privilege of
leadership, political, military and religious;
asking for gifts of wisdom and resolve
in the search for reconciliation and peace.

**God of all goodness and grace,
give us peace.**

In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer.

StF 51: Great is Thy faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKlqmdfHsk> (Trad)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eQ1oal44wU>

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and Springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960), William M. Runyan (1870–1957);
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A Prayer of Blessing

May the peace of God which passes all
understanding keep your hearts and minds in
the knowledge and love of God our Father,
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
And the blessing of God, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

*Today worship materials prepared by
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